

LOVERBOY

Written by

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EXT: SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

A well kept avenue in the north of England, flooded with early summer sun. Clean cars parked on neat driveways. Music filters in: fast, Latino dance funk, from --

-- sparkling french windows, cast open. Floor length veils billow between heavier drapes. Sunlight bounces, dapples, reveals a lone male figure, limbering up within.

INT: SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

The music is turned right up. DARREN, 17, lithe and confident in his prowess. He stretches his arms, torso, legs. All his mother's furniture has been pushed to one wall.

Rehearsed steps come rhythmically, creep into his workout.

He spins, leaps, tumbles, surrounded by his blasting, digital wall of sound.

The sunshine streams in, lights his twirling frame. He dances harder, faster. Snatches his T-shirt off over his head.

He flows, undulates tirelessly, like the crack of a whip.

EXT: SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

A two year old black Range Rover bumps gently onto the driveway of Darren's mother's house. It sails in, like a yacht blocking out the old VW Golf sitting by the garage.

INT: DARREN'S MOTHER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Darren dives to the floor, springs to his feet. He senses --

-- the front door slam shut: a presence in the house.

He stops dead, sweating, breathing hard. He pads to the stereo, tilts the music down an inquisitive touch, then off.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

Two ladies, bosom buddies, bustle in together. The first, BEV, 40, enjoying her teen revival, is Darren's mother. She's already tipsy.

Younger, better dressed, is SANDRA: the Range Rover driver.

They flop high end shopping bags onto the well worn hall settee, moving through.

They occupy the kitchen, as Darren deftly skips past behind. He scampers up the stairs. They don't hear him at all.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Ice cubes bump into crystal tumblers.

Gin, tonic, flow and fizz.

Bev, hips swaying, carries the drinks, fag at her lips.

Sandra fishes a pack of Marlboro from her Mulberry satchel.

Bev nudges patio doors wide. They step adventurously into the garden and the sunlight.

INT: BATHROOM - DAY

Mist rolls out from the shower, Darren's arms rinsing down.

EXT: GARDEN - DAY

Sandra and Bev lounge back on recliners, gins and ciggies held up. Skirts hiked past their knees. They clink glasses.

INT: BATHROOM - DAY

Darren steps from the shower, towels himself. He saunters, butt naked, to --

INT: DARREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

-- his juvenile retreat. A cloud of body spray materialises.

EXT: GARDEN - DAY

The ladies grind their cigarettes out at the same time.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

Darren, hair slicked, towel slopped around his waist, skitters down the stairs.

EXT: GARDEN - DAY

Sandra basks in the clear sunshine. She checks her cigarette pack. The last one rattles inside.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Darren searches through piles of clean laundry. He feeds a shirt out, snaps it in the air. Turns to see --

-- Sandra, frozen by the snap. Her eyes flicker across --
 -- Darren's physique.

DARREN
 (local accent)
 Hi, Sandra.

She composes herself.

SANDRA
 (local accent)
 I hope that towel doesn't slip,
 Sunshine.

Darren smirks. He gets a beer from the fridge, pops it open.
 A touch of defiance, he struts past her.

Sandra turns away, roots through her satchel for Marlboro.
 She hears him bound up the stairs, giggles to herself.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

Darren lunges to the top of the stairs.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra sighs, quietly knocks her drink back.

SANDRA
 (to Bev, outside)
 Bev! More gin?

The sound of ice in an empty glass replies. Sandra scouts the
 kitchen. No gin.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 We're switching to vodka!

She slides a bottle of good stuff from her satchel.

BEV (O.S.)
 (local accent)
 Sandra! I'll be needing to give you
 something for that. You bought
 lunch.

Sandra fixes the drinks.

SANDRA
 Really, Beverly? Besides...
 Charles'd be bloody mortified if he
 knew any other bugger'd paid.

EXT: GARDEN - DAY

As Sandra approaches with the drinks, Bev concedes.

SANDRA
Anyway, I forgot to pay for it.

Bev gasps.

BEV
Sandra! You always were a little
tea leaf. I can't believe you're
still nicking vodka.

SANDRA
I know. Cheers.

They clink again.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

Darren casually descends the stairs, sleeves up? Sleeves
down? The ladies' laughter resonates from the garden.

EXT: GARDEN - DAY

Darren pecks his mother's offered cheek.

SANDRA
Ooh. Who's the lucky lady?

DARREN
Got a date, later. Georgia. Just
some girl from Dance.

SANDRA
Ah, of course. Little gold mine,
that dancing.

DARREN
Yeah. Maybe later.

And off he goes, deservedly cocky.

Sandra, salacious smirk, shakes her head in admiration. Her
mobile goes off, faint, buried in her satchel. Annoyed, she
leaves it to ring.

Bev gives her a knowing look.

SANDRA
All the time, because I'm here.

EXT: COUNTRY STYLE BOOZER - DAY

Cheesy, '70s rock lilts from the bar to the Beer Garden.

Darren, plus four of DARREN'S MATES at a picnic bench. Only Darren stands, handsome, a subtle preen.

A group of FEMALE STUDENTS at another picnic table.

Darren, evening sun across him, takes a strong sip of beer.

The Female Students hush slightly, then burst out laughing.

Darren smiles. At least they're looking.

DARREN'S MATE #1
Sit down, you wanker.

Darren cuffs him round the back of the head.

One of the girls keeps looking over, waiting for --

-- Darren's glimpse back. They hold, and hold: an assured, friendly smile; a coy, silly blink.

Car engines rumble into the car park as Darren strolls to the girls' table.

INT: BEV'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra and Bev, liberated under the kitchen spotlights, whirl around to Darren's Latino funk, just as --

-- Darren, cringing, makes his return. He observes, can't help laughing, but with them.

DARREN
(to Bev)
Your form's all wrong.
(to Sandra)
Yours isn't bad.

SANDRA
Thank you, Sir.

BEV
We need more drinks!

SANDRA
Ha ha! And we have more.

Bev, massively drunk, suddenly hits her limit. She totters out of the kitchen, waving goodnight.

Sandra shows the bottle to Darren. He politely shakes his head. She shrugs, sips. He goes to check on Bev.

INT: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bev, already asleep on the couch, still up against the wall. Darren taps the stereo off, drapes a sheepskin over her.

INT: KITCHEN - NIGHT

Darren pops a beer, sups back, thirsty. Sandra lights a fag. Darren clicks on a radio - slow, late night tunes.

SANDRA
So, what are your plans?

DARREN
What for?

SANDRA
The rest of the Summer. There's got to be more than pints, and girls.

DARREN
Have you two been plotting?

Sandra exhales smoke, shakes her head firmly.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I know, I have to do something. Stay here... or get a bike, do Europe. Not sure.

SANDRA
A bike? A motorbike? What does your mother say about that?

DARREN
Usual shit. Too dangerous. Anyway, I should be getting down to London, for proper auditions.

She squints at him.

SANDRA
It'd be safer, too.

DARREN
What, have you never done anything dangerous, Sandy?

SANDRA
No. And don't you go calling me 'Sandy'. She loves you, Sunshine.

DARREN
She loves being pissed. Slow death, quick death. In my eyes, only difference is a fearless heart.

SANDRA

Oh! And you have a fearless heart?

He considers it.

DARREN

Yeah.

SANDRA

In that case, Charles rang earlier. One of our guys let us down, yet again, so Charles, being Charles, sacked him. Job's yours if you want it. Closer to London. I can take you in myself if you tell me early enough.

It's on a plate.

DARREN

I've never worked in a hotel.

Sandra tuts, gives a little chuckle.

DARREN (CONT'D)

No, no. That'd be good.

SANDRA

Cheers, then.

DARREN

Cheers.

They toast. His eyes meet hers, for just a bit too long. It could be awkward, sober. But it's not. It's something else.

Their gaze breaks.

SANDRA

Just remember to smile.

They both do big, silly smiles.

Darren's eyes. He stares, intently now, at Sandra. He blatantly takes her in. Her arms, chest, shoulders. Face.

She looks back at him, waiting for him to stop.

He remains locked on, gets to her eyes again. He breathes in, breaks away, swigs his beer and fidgets.

Sandra stays quiet, casting for something to say. An '80s ballad drifts over the radio.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Oh, I love this.

She sways a little in her chair, to lighten the heavy air. It just gets worse. Darren gets into it, too.

In moments, he's doing a simple step, back and forth.

She can't help smiling. He's undeniably good to watch. And she can't help joining him.

They dance, apart, around the kitchen. The song lifts to a passionate bridge.

And the chorus. Darren's hand goes out. Sandra takes it. He swings her tenderly through his arm.

Another hand, taken.

They're close, not quite together. Still just dancing.

He sweeps his hand over her head, arching her back. Darren twirls their arms down again, so that her back is to him.

Sandra guides herself in closer, their bodies, slammed from the hips up.

Her face is serious. Darren breathes across her neck. Eyes fluttering, she sighs with him.

The song fades out to the midnight news. They're left, slightly swaying to no music. Sandra moves her hands across his, keeping them on her.

Faces touching, a tiny twist of the neck and they brush lips. Then Sandra turns to Darren.

And they cannot stop.

Their hands go inside each other's clothes. She yanks and flips his belt open.

Darren walks Sandra to the wall. His fingers slip her skirt catch across. It drops away.

Sandra's hand searches the wall, smacks the light off.

In the near dark, they masturbate each other. It's divine for both of them.

They kiss each other's mouths and faces like crazy.

Sandra wrenches herself away, still jammed at the wall.

DARREN

What's wrong?

SANDRA

Oh, my God. What are we doing?

Darren waits, tense. His arms tremble, still either side of her. Their clothes, half on, half off.

In the radio glow, she looks into his eyes. They're shining back. Like hers.

Sandra grabs him in again. She moans consent as he slides down, squatting in front of her.

It lasts seconds. Her, enthralled, watching --
-- him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Stop. Darren. Please, stop.

He stands in front of her, stopped. She adjusts her clothes, pulling herself together.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
God. Let's just stop.

DARREN
Are you -

SANDRA
Yes. Yes, I'll just see you in the morning.

DARREN
Okay. See you for breakfast.

Darren retreats, obedient, for Sandra to gather her dignity. She glances at the ceiling.

SANDRA
Shit.

EXT: BEVERLY'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Morning birdsong fills the brilliant, sunlit stillness.

Sandra's Range Rover driver's door clumps shut. The ignition starts. The engine twitches into a diesel burble.

INT: DARREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Through a gap in the curtains, a bar of sunlight menaces Darren's eyelids. He stirs beneath the duvet.

EXT: BEVERLY'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Sandra's tyres bump carefully out onto the road.

INT: DARREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

He wakes, automatically collects his phone from his bedside cabinet. A moment passes as his brain fires up.

DARREN

Shit!

He leaps out of bed in his underwear, phone in hand.

EXT: BEVERLY AND DARREN'S STREET - DAY

Sandra's car creeps forward, then zips away.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

Darren, elegance discarded, makes it downstairs.

INT: LIVING ROOM - DAY

He hurtles in, furniture still at the wall. Darren slides up to the french windows, panicked, cranes his neck to see --

-- the driveway, empty. He closes his eyes tight.

DARREN

Shit! Double. Shit!

BEV (O.S.)

Language.

Shoulders flopped in defeat, he stomps from the room.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Sandra, driving. Thoughtful, gives a wicked little smile.

INT: BEV'S HOUSE - DAY

The kitchen radio still tinkles quietly. Darren scrapes a kitchen chair out, collapses into it. He buries his head in his arms. He dozes off.

MOMENTS LATER

Bev puts a cup of coffee in front of him, waking him. She flashes a disapproving glance and waltzes off.

BEV

Toast's on. I'm going back to bed.

DARREN
Thanks, Mum.

Darren, mean faced, scrolls through his phone. Sips the coffee. His thumb stops, selects a contact.

It reads:- 'Georgia (dance)'.

His phone, on the table, rings on speaker, extra loud.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
(on the phone)
And what can I do for you?

DARREN
Hey! Good morning, gorgeous.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Someone owes someone an apology,
don't they?

DARREN
I honestly want to talk about that,
I really do. Are you free, kind of
an hours time?

The toast pops, muffling a faint car door slam from outside. Darren hears it, jumps from the chair. He picks up the phone.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Two ticks, love. Someone's at my
door.

Georgia quickly changes tack.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Okay-I'm-coming-round-now.

He's fixed on the front door, ladies' footsteps approaching.

Sandra, going about her day, spins in through the door.

Darren, happily puzzled, doesn't speak.

Sandra sees he's on the phone, smiles, mouths 'Good morning'.

GEORGIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Are you there? Darren?

He turns, tracks Sandra's stride, across to the kitchen.

DARREN
Yeah! Er, yeah, I'll call you back.

He hangs up.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I thought you'd left.

SANDRA
No. Just cigarettes.

She waves 3 packs of Marlboro.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Besides, you and I have a deal,
Sunshine.

Darren's phone buzzes angrily. Sandra looks from the phone to Darren, back again. He shakes his head wisely. She shrugs.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
As long as... we agree last night
was just something silly, and
shouldn't happen again.

Darren, solemn, nods.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Good. Go and pack, then. I need a
coffee.

Darren pauses, commits, darts for the stairs. Stops again.

DARREN
Oh, what about -

SANDRA
Yes? What about Beverly?

Darren dithers at the door.

Sandra proficiently prepares the coffee machine.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I'll make sure she's happy. And for
God's sake, put some clothes on.

She arches an eyebrow at him, indicates the stairs.

Darren dashes off.

INT: BEV'S LIVING ROOM - LATER DAY

Sandra and Bev nudge furniture back into original places.
Bev, fragile, lies on a couch while Sandra disappears.

Sandra returns, sets coffees down, flings the curtains open.

BEV
Fucking hell, woman.

Bev writhes, shields her eyes while Sandra laughs.

SANDRA
 Charmed. Coffee time, ungrateful
 cow.

INT: DARREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Darren shoves clothes into a sports bag. He pauses, face twitching as he thinks. He darts into --

-- THE BATHROOM. Grabs his sprays, gels, creams.

INT: BEV'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bev's jittery hands slide a cigarette out of its pack. She flicks a lighter, toasting the tobacco alive.

BEV
 Shit in my fucking mouth, Sandra.

Sandra lights up, exhales extravagantly.

SANDRA
 Rough?

Bev holds the V sign up. They giggle.

Darren's bag lands, thump, in the hall. Their laughter stops. Sandra's face shows it's time to start convincing Bev.

Bev rises, peers into the hall as Darren's feet scamper back upstairs. Sandra hustles behind her.

Bev's puzzled look follows Darren down again. He slows, winds headphone leads round his wrist.

Smoke curls from both ladies' propped up hands.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 He's -

DARREN
 I'm going to work for Sandra, Mum.

Sandra closes her eyes. Bev's mouth opens, keeps opening.

SANDRA
 Yes. We talked about it.

Bev turns, agog, on Sandra's voice.

BEV
 I don't remember talking about
 anything of the sort.

Darren's shoulders flop. His leads dangle.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra lays more coffees down for everyone. Bev sits, gown wrapped, defiant.

Darren, chair out, plays nervously with his face. Sandra sits away from Darren, pushes fags and lighter to Bev.

Bev stirs her coffee. Slow, controlled, deliberate.

The doorbell goes. Bev takes a cigarette. Darren twigs.

DARREN
Ah, motherf -

Sandra and Bev stare at him.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I mean, I'll get it.

Bev overdoes the dismayed mother bit.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

The shape of a teenage girl, behind front door dimpled glass. Darren slumps, drags his feet to answer it.

GEORGIA, 17, slender and supple in her shift dress, daintily steps in. She flings her arms round Darren's neck.

He tries to shut the door behind her as she kisses his face.

There's mumbled conversation from the kitchen, mingled with radio play.

INT: BEV'S KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra edges closer to Bev.

SANDRA
...meant to be anything serious. A quick job, just for the Summer, and it's closer to where he really needs to be.

Bev looks like she's being told off. Behind her, Georgia seductively leads Darren across the hall to the stairs.

GEORGIA
Come on, gorgeous. You said you were sorry, and you're forgiven.

Sandra and Bev react to Georgia's plan.

BEV
Morning, Georgia, love.

Georgia's face drops.

Sandra's face drops.

Darren's face is quiet horror. Bev smokes her fag.

BEV (CONT'D)

You'd better make the most of him.
He's off to work in a hotel by the
sounds of things.

GEORGIA

Morning. Hotel? What hotel? You
never told me.

BEVERLY

Me neither.

Bev smiles, smug and superior.

GEORGIA

Which.. Where? Who for?

DARREN

Her.

SANDRA AND BEV

Her?

DARREN

Sorry, Mum. Sorry, Sandra.

SANDRA

Georgia, it's just for the Summer.
You'll be back together before you
know it. You'll see. Trust me.

Bev chimes in.

BEV

Hard graft, long hours, whingey
customers. He'll be back.

Darren turns imploringly to Georgia. Glassy eyed, her lip
quivers into a gurn.

DARREN

Sorry, Georgia. Georgia, let's
talk. Upstairs.

Darren and Georgia drift off.

GEORGIA (O.S.)

Hotel..?

Sandra rolls her eyes at Bev.

PRE LAP Rap, thumping bass, distant in the background.

EXT: DRIVEWAY - DAY

Rap blares out of Darren's bedroom window. Bev smokes by the front door. Sandra traipses back and forth, packing her car.

The last bag goes in. Sandra glances up to Darren's room.

BEV
Coffee? I think they're still
'saying goodbye'.

INT: DARREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rap, loud, drowns out Darren and Georgia having vigorous sex under Darren's duvet.

INT: BEV'S KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra and Bev wait together.

The rap track from upstairs finishes. The sound of Darren's bed knocking the wall replaces it. Another track starts.

Sandra's eyes widen.

SANDRA
(under her breath)
Fuck me.

Bev, bored, twists a finger in her hair.

EXT: DRIVEWAY - DAY

Bev hugs Sandra goodbye.

Darren hugs Georgia in the doorway as Sandra starts the car.

INT/EXT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Her fingers drum the steering wheel, watching as Darren still hugs Georgia. Bev gently, advisedly prises them apart.

Darren, moon faced, climbs longingly in beside Sandra. She turns, speaking to him. He nods bravely. The car reverses.

Through the window, he sees Bev rest her arm on Georgia's sobbing shoulders. They both wave to the car. He waves back.

Sandra, this side of losing patience, watches the mirrors. She slaps the car into Drive, skids as she pulls away.

EXT: MOTORWAY - DAY

Sandra's Range Rover belts along, past a sign:- 'The South'.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Darren's mobile goes off. It's in his hand like lightning. Sandra notices, stays fixed on the traffic.

DARREN
(to phone)
Buddy.

The caller chatters to Darren. He cringes, but he's smiling.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Oh, what! No, she didn't!
(to Sandra)
Georgia's rang all my mates.

Sandra, unimpressed, nods. Darren spasms to the phone, giggles silently beside her. She pulls out, to --

EXT: MOTORWAY - DAY

-- overtake.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Darren thrashes in his seatbelt. Sandra's cheeks puff out. She prods the dash. Her own phone dials through on bluetooth.

Darren wipes tears away, inhales through his laughter.

DARREN
I ain't gonna work too hard, fam.

Sandra coughs, does the 'receiver down' sign at him. Her phone is answered at the other end.

CHARLES (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Hello, darling.

DARREN
Yeah, see you, bud.

CHARLES (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Hello? Who's that?

SANDRA
(accent vanishes)
Me, darling. It's me, Charles.

CHARLES (O.S.)
I heard a male voice.

SANDRA
I've Darren with me. We'll arrive
half hour, tops.

She smiles assuredly at the recovering Darren. He openly gawks at the new accent, then rushes to answer a fresh text.

Sandra's smile fades.

EXT: MOTORWAY - DAY

Sandra's car flashes by.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles' lavish, leather office chair rolls to the antique desk. There's the sound of computer keys, typing, slowly.

CHARLES (O.S.)
Hmm.

EXT: CHARLES' OFFICE WINDOW - DAY

The private grounds of a countryside conversion. From within, a screen glow seeps around the silhouette of Charles' chair.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Sandra indicates with conviction, glances at Darren. He's fallen asleep. She pulls over to --

EXT: SLIP ROAD - DAY

-- leave the motorway.

EXT: COUNTRY B ROADS - DAY

Sandra's Range Rover chugs along, slows for a junction. Her phone rings, loud, easily heard outside the car.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Darren, drooling, wakes.

The dash phone display reads:- 'Mum calling'.

Sandra's eyes narrow, hesitant. She lets the phone ring, speeds up. It goes to voicemail, and stops.

Darren notices she didn't answer.

Sandra whisks ahead, silent.

EXT: THE HOTEL - DAY

An idyllic Georgian rural pad. Highly renovated and refurbished, spotless everywhere. Splendid beds of marigolds blaze around garden statues, trellises, a spraying fountain.

Darren's face in the car window, can't help but be impressed.

Sandra's Range Rover curves into the drive, crawls, crunching over gravel. She pulls past --

-- other elite auto marques, and further, to --

-- THE STAFF CAR PARK, containing one Jaguar XK8, one old red Volvo estate and one very old Mini with flat tyres.

EXT: HOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

Well heeled guests, intently ignoring each other, mince about, from their cars to --

-- the glorious atrium lobby: an essay in light and space.

A jaunty GROUP IN TWEEDS cheerily carry packed gunslips. They pile into a waiting Defender.

EXT: STAFF CAR PARK - DAY

Sandra, unsteady heels on the gravel, leads Darren. He swings his sports bag and laptop case, taking it in.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

A wine bottle tips to refill a glass. No wine appears.

Charles' chair whirs backwards.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Sandra still leads. They slow. She jangles a big bunch of keys, unclips one.

SANDRA

I'll show you your room, and you'll be needing... this.

Darren shuffles luggage. She can't wait around.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Tell you what, grab it later. Room
 Three, it's open. Your uniform's up
 there, too. I guessed your size.

Darren's brow crumples at the mention of this uniform.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 You were asleep, Sunshine.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

A gloomy little box space. With his fingertips, Darren picks up a flimsy polythene bundle of clothes from his single bed. Polyester livery slides out, unwraps itself before him.

He grimaces, breathes in. He inspects his quarters: one small window shows treetops and sky; one single wardrobe; back to --

-- the single bed. He pokes his head into a slim door: at least there's his own shower and toilet.

He reluctantly takes off his T-shirt.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - DAY

Sandra, secretive at the far end of the property, speaks, hushed, into her mobile.

SANDRA
 That's been quick.

Her conspirator replies.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Right. Doesn't matter.

More chatter.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 No. I'm telling you, that can all
 wait. We'll go together in my car.

Responses.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Okay. Love you, too. Bye.

She presses her hands to her forehead.

Composed, she steps quickly back towards the Hotel.

CHARLES (O.S.)
 Darling!

Sandra whips round. There he is. CHARLES: mid 50s, good living masks an innate, powerful build. Waving, smiling, he strides over to her.

She shows a lot of teeth back, maintains her own direction.

SANDRA
Hi. How's it been?

Darren, uniformed, hating it, ventures into daylight. He sees Charles scoop Sandra up, within earshot.

CHARLES
Like pants and socks living together.

Darren gingerly corrects him.

DARREN
You mean... cats and dogs?

Charles maintains his grip on Sandra, feigns surprise.

CHARLES
Oh! Cats and dogs. Never dreamt it was cats and dogs. That's insane.

SANDRA
Charles, come on. Darren, you remember Charles, don't you?

Darren nods. The two males diligently greet each other.

CHARLES
Hmm... Vino. Yes?

Sandra gives Darren's uniform a sympathetic once over. Beckons him to follow.

INT: HOTEL - DAY

Sandra's heels tick along. Darren lopes behind, gazes about.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

A cheap radio blasts hallowed rock tunes. Sandra and Darren wait reverently, their side of the service counter.

A pair of strong, bloody hands wipe on a tea towel. One, still quite gory, reaches out. It belongs to CHEF: mid 30s, friendly and intensely busy in whites and a Sham 69 T-shirt.

Darren hesitates to shake hands, until Sandra tilts her head. He complies, overcompensating.

Chef gives him a faux doubtful look, winks at Sandra, spins back to his kitchen. Sandra ushers Darren out.

Their steps muffle as they enter the capacious --

-- DINING ROOM. No stopping. They meet the bare light of --

-- THE LOBBY, heels clicking again.

Sandra inspects the Booking Ledger, still on paper. Darren's interest is not piqued. He's seen someone approaching.

Sandra's talon slides down lists:- 'Restaurant'; 'Suites'.

Another set of heels click into the Lobby.

Sandra looks up sharply.

SANDRA

Jeannie!

Sandra and Darren both smile genuinely at --

-- JEANNIE, 24, an ethereal touch of wilderness about her. She glides over the flooring.

Darren winces as he notices --

-- her uniform, the same as his, but hers fits like a glove.

Jeannie nods a sage like greeting to him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'd like you to meet Jeannie.
You're going to be working tightly
together.

JEANNIE

Yes. Hello. Darren. Yes. Hello.

Darren's smile fades to open mouthed stupor under her gaze.

PRE LAP - the sound of chaotic restaurant activity, voices, cutlery, frying, crockery, builds as --

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY INTO NIGHT

-- Darren shadows Jeannie in a flurry of --

-- fetching orders, Sandra's watchful eye --

-- the service bell, slapped, chimes loudly --

-- clearing tables --

-- Chef slaps the bell --

-- serving customers, Sandra assists --

-- the bell chimes --

-- swerving through gaps, laden with plates. Jeannie, chuckling, twice Darren's speed.

Chef works madly, chimes the bell, Darren appears. Chef points to food, makes whipping motions at him.

Darren, too hassled to laugh, goes to grab the plates.

Chef lunges at Darren, paternal palm to Stop! Offers a cloth, just as --

-- Darren's hand meets a plate. His whole arm jumps back.

Chef, apologetic, holds up a half empty bottle of red.

Darren sucks his thumb, pauses, snatches a quick swig. He looks round. The plates have vanished.

Jeannie, disappearing with his order.

Chef, cooking again, chortles. Jeannie flies back in, kicks Darren's backside, zooms off again. The bell chimes.

Darren jumps to: fetches orders; recites dishes, memory fails, peeks at a menu; clears tables; bell chimes; serving orders, bell chimes; serving desserts, bloody sparklers, bell chimes; swerves the gaps, chime, chime, chime.

Darren, wiped out, yawns. Jeannie grins, taps his cheek.

Chef wipes down.

Jeannie counts cash.

Charles, smug, vino in hand, collects it.

Chef waves a goodbye over his shoulder and is gone.

INT: LOBBY - NIGHT

Jeannie, on autopilot, flips through the Booking Ledger.

JEANNIE

... and for God's sake, remember,
it's 'Suites', never 'rooms'.

Darren, leaning beside her, nods.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

And keep being nice. You've got to
be nice.

She slams the Ledger shut, taps her pocket.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Piece of piss, okay?

DARREN
Tips any good, then?

JEANNIE
If you are. Splits with the
kitchen, and Charles. Tax, see?
Legal percentage, of what goes in.

She waits for it to sink in. It's not, he's too tired. She
gestures her pocket again, winks.

The penny drops.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Fuck's sake. Let's lay up for the
morning.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Darren and Jeannie, alone in pale electric light from the
rooms. They trudge to the staff quarters.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darren kicks the door shut behind him, flops onto his bed.
Knock, knock at the door. He rolls off the bed.

Gormless, flings the door open to --

-- Jeannie, already in her civvies: classy, a touch of Goth.
She flicks her head. Let's go.

Darren frowns.

She mimes drinking a pint. Exhausted, he surrenders.

INT/EXT: LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

Rather posh, rather dull. Darren, pint in hand, comes alive.

Jeannie and Darren smoke roll ups outside. Another pint
downed. Shots! More arrive. They knock them back.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Charles, cuddling an empty wine glass, snores in his chair.

On a shelf behind Charles sits a framed photograph. It shows
a grinning squaddie in dress uniform with his bride. Charles
is 19 in this photo, but the bride is not Sandra.

The glass slides, drops. He jolts awake. Checks his watch.

He blusters out of the office, slams the door. Jangles his own bunch of keys, yanks the handle. Yes, it's locked.

Charles, sobered up, shudders in the night air. He strolls along his tastefully lit gardens. He hears... some bloke, pissing in a dark corner.

Abhorred, Charles investigates. Nearing, he realises it's --

-- Darren, swaying, one hand up on the wall. His other hand directs urine onto Charles' marigolds.

Charles, stern, watches, waits. Eventually, Darren finishes.

With intimate menace, Charles' hand smooths round the scruff of Darren's neck.

Darren, heaving drunken breath, makes the connection.

DARREN

Charles. Sorry about that, Charles.

He grins a slurred giggle. Charles' grip tightens, voice low.

CHARLES

Put your cock away, and go to fucking bed.

Darren zips up. Charles steers him to the staff quarters. He gives a stifled chuckle as Darren clatters through the door.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

What a twat.

He struts off, bleep bleeps his Jaguar unlocked.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Chef cracks an egg into a pan to fry. And another.

Jeannie seizes plates of breakfasts, three, four at a time. She scoots away.

Darren, bumbling, tries to imitate. Manages two.

She pours multiple coffees from a rattling, steaming machine.

INT: HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

Darren, plate in each hand, gets cocky. Serves one, a little flourish. Forgets his other hand. Food slides from the plate.

The BREAKFASTLESS DINER, vacant curiosity.

Darren, horrified, backs away. Jeannie leans in, takes his sleeve with a cheesy smile.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Eggs crack, sizzle.

Chef, still working, stands with Sandra, tasting different sales samples. Equally delicious.

Coffees pour. Jeannie fake smiles at Darren, nods to --
-- orders coming.

JEANNIE

Come on then, Dreamboat.

Darren's chuffed: she clearly means him. Sandra and Chef, lost in tastes, seem not to hear Jeannie's comment.

The bell chimes.

INT: HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

Breakfastless Diner finishes her plate. Leaves a tip.

Jeannie clears, swipes the tip, shows it to Darren.

Charles saunters by, points to --

-- his tip jar.

Charles winks.

Plink, plink, the coins drop in.

A table of teenage girls giggle behind Darren as he clears tables. He can't turn round. He's blushing.

Their table empties. It's filled by a GRUMPY GUY.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Poached eggs whirl in a pan of boiling water.

INT: HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

Grumpy Guy indicates that his breakfast is dead wrong. Darren argues. Jeannie appears! All smiles, she removes the plate.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Chef does his 'wanker' sign, turns his back, works his magic.

INT: HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

Grumpy Guy self righteously enjoys his breakfast.

Darren hovers, moves on.

Jeannie and Chef, giggling, take a sneaky look from the kitchen. Jeannie frantically shoves Chef into --

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

--- his domain, as Sandra stalks in right alongside, tapping her watch.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles uncomfortably checks his watch. Drums his fingers.

He contemplates a clean, empty wine glass on top of his desk.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Chef slaps bacon and egg down for --

-- Darren And Jeannie. They tear into it. Jeannie, inhaling fried egg, finishes before Darren.

JEANNIE
(to Chef)
Cheers, Dreamboat.

And she's off.

CHEF
Anytime, Shipwreck!

Darren's crestfallen. Not as dreamy as he thought.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY INTO NIGHT

Jeannie mentors Darren; customers arrive and leave; welcomes and farewells; wine pours, corks pop, more wine.

Sandra, calm, conducts the performance with a nod, a gesture. Her hand lays on Darren's shoulder, re-directs.

Candles on tables, lit with a match. Darkness filters along.

Darren yawns, Jeannie nudges - this carousel doesn't stop.

Seated customers yearn for attention.

Steak sizzles.

Pasta boils.

Sandra's eyes, observing transitions.

Cutlery placed on an empty plate.

The final candle snuffed, Darren trudges away.

Sandra's matriarchal gaze follows him.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stripped off, he flops into bed. Straight to sleep.

PRE LAP - the sound of Darren's mobile phone alarm pings.
Louder, louder...

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm pings like a siren. It shows:- '06.00'.

Darren, next to it, flat out. He springs to life.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

A succulent bacon sandwich slides along the counter.

Darren, lost in a micro nap. The bell chimes. He jumps to.

Chef jerks a thumb out the door.

CHEF

Boss man.

Chef turns his back, suppresses a giggle.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Darren proudly bears the Boss man's sandwich.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles offers his laptop a thoughtful grimace.

Darren pops the sandwich down, next to Charles.

CHARLES

Do people no longer knock?

He glares and points at the sandwich.

DARREN

Sorry, Ch -

CHARLES
What is that supposed to be?

DARREN
Bacon sarnie.

CHARLES
Bacon? Sarnie?

Darren dithers.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You do know what bacon is, Darren?

DARREN
Meat?

CHARLES
Meat. And where's this meat from?

DARREN
Ehh... It's... pigs. Dead pigs.

CHARLES
Correct. Pigs carcass, correct.
Where do these pigs originate?

DARREN
A farm.

CHARLES
Okay, the baby pigs.

DARREN
Other, adult pigs, I guess.

CHARLES
IN-correct. Pigs, young man, are
the vile result of the coupling
between a man and a wild sow. I'll
bet you didn't even so much as
suspect that, did you?

Darren, stumped, eyes Charles with a concerned suspicion. Is
this guy kidding?

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Take it away, please.

Darren picks it up, retreats, in both relief and disbelief.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Darren mopes away from the office.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Plate and sandwich clatter into the bin.

Darren shrugs at Chef, who creases up. He gets right up to Darren's face, makes hysterical piggy noises.

Darren's evasion is too slow. Chef presents his backside to Darren, pressing him up at the counter.

CHEF
(pig voice)
Come on, Darren. Let's make a
little piggy baby together.

Darren reluctantly gives in to the joke.

DARREN
Fuck off. Silly bugger.

INT: LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Sandra edits her Ledger. She looks up, wonders which idiot is making a noise like a squealing pig. She dismisses it.

Quietly irritated, she scratches corrections.

Distracted again, she sees --

-- Darren, still laughing to himself, waves to her.

Her eyes narrow wickedly. She beckons him to her.

LOBBY - LATER DAY

Darren, bored but obedient by Sandra's side. She speaks, briefing him softly.

SANDRA
...and Missus Burroughs as usual,
joined by Mister and Missus Nawker.

DARREN
Nawker? What do the Nawkers look
like? Are they a pair of Nawkers?

She tries to give him her stern face.

SANDRA
Oh, shut up.

Darren smiles all his pretty teeth for her.

She gazes into his face, nears him ever so slightly. Sandra pulls herself back to work.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Where was I? Oh, bollocks. Jeannie!

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Exactly the same as Darren's, but hers is littered with clothes, books on self help, the occult.

Jeannie hands Darren a glass of murky orangeade.

JEANNIE
Here you go. My sister sent these up from Cornwall.

She indicates a damp package, torn open to reveal stringy, pale blue mushrooms.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Their season's hit massively early.

Excited smile, she flicks open a Zippo, lights a joss stick.

Darren accepts the drink but hesitates, inspects the new magic within.

DARREN
You ever heard what Charles says about bacon?

She looks wistfully disappointed for Charles.

JEANNIE
Yeah, poor child. Think happy thoughts, and down the hatch.

She guzzles every last drop of her own glass of orangeade.

Darren, suitably convinced, does the same.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - LATER NIGHT

A line of joss stick ash in the wooden holder.

Darren and Jeannie, resting separately, are zonked.

Darren stares in wonder at his legs.

Jeannie beholds her hands, like an infant's discovery.

JEANNIE
Four fingers is funny. Either too many, or not really quite enough.

Her fingers phase through her vision.

Moments pass.

DARREN

What?

She turns in amazement to his voice, lost in recollection.

JEANNIE

That was ages ago.

His head turns to hers. Both their eyes are like saucers. He jumps in shock as she bursts out laughing.

INT: STAFF KITCHENETTE - DAY

Another high, box room, with a fridge, toaster and microwave.

Darren, unsteady, yawning uncontrollably. He shakes loud cereal into a bowl, irritating himself.

Jeannie, chirpy, contemplates his morning exertion. She munches marmalade soaked toast.

He turns tightly to take his seat with her.

JEANNIE

Mmm... marmalade.

Darren splashes milk into his bowl and onto the table.

DARREN

Aw, for fu -

JEANNIE

Sleep all right, did you?

He makes hard work of wiping up the spill.

DARREN

Who's in the room next to me?

A faint smile of anticipation on Jeannie's face.

JEANNIE

No one.

DARREN

Bloody is. Bloody banging furniture. All bloody night.

JEANNIE

Hmm. That's the ghost. Or one of them. There's others.

Darren, no mood for Jeannie's hippy shit, shakes his head.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Don't be frightened. Can't hurt you, can it?

She finishes her toast, stands, cleans her plate, stretches. Freshness itself.

Darren waits, does a fake scared face. She leans right in, superior, to his ear.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Darren. There is no room next to yours. Is there?

His eyes register. His face drops. Darren shivers.

She backs away, gives him a big, wide eyed stare of truth.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

A similar age to Bev's house, but larger, shinier, and detached. All aspects trimmed, swept and enamelled.

INT. SANDRA AND CHARLES' DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Sandra curled around a folded copy of The Telegraph. She twiddles a biro in her hand, scrutinises the crossword.

From somewhere in the house, the sound of a toilet flushes. Sandra, locked in the puzzle, doesn't flicker.

Her pen stops dancing, her eyes flash. She squiggles her solution in the grid.

Charles lowers into an armchair across the room from her. Adjusts his backside, zaps the TV on.

CHARLES

That's done the trick.

Sandra lacks interest in his news, continues her notes.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Jesus, my arse is on fire. That curry -

She slaps the paper down.

SANDRA

Does Jesus really need to know what state your fucking arse is in?

Charles pulls a big face.

CHARLES

All right. Remain calm. Reflection of one's health, the condition of a movement.

SANDRA
I'm calm enough. Just... keep any
movements to yourself.

He fishes about the chairs confines.

CHARLES
Where's that other bloody remote?

Sandra springs from her couch, stomps to the artisan wine
rack against an alcove.

She yanks a bottle. It shrieks from its hole.

SANDRA
Drink?

CHARLES
What? Oh, yes.

She sprints away from him. Charles gives up on the remote. He
squints at screen listings. A dull squeak, the pop of a cork.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Show it the top of the glass, will
you, darling?

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra stands, frozen, glass in one hand, bottle in the
other. She stares at her reflection in the kitchen window.

Then she's staring straight through, into her imagination.

Lost there, she has a faint smile.

Charles' voice snaps her back.

CHARLES (O.S.)
Hey. You know, I reckon that Darren
of yours is a bit sweet on Jeannie.

Her face turns bitter. She pours two glasses, to the top.

INT: DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Charles tuts, rapid channel surfing. Sandra's hand, glass of
vino, appears next to his displeased face.

SANDRA
What'd you say?

CHARLES

Ah, chin. Yeah. Your Darren. I heard Jeannie and him, clanging a fag earlier. Reckon he'll be giving her one by the end of the week.

SANDRA

He's hardly 'my' Darren.

CHARLES

Won't be the first, of course. And certainly not the -

SANDRA

Charles. It's none of our business. For God's sake.

Charles sips his wine, loves it. Shrewdly regards his wife.

CHARLES

You seem to be...

Sandra resumes her seat and crossword. She takes two good gulps of wine. Feigns a casual air.

SANDRA

Delicious. Seem to be what, darling?

Charles doesn't put anything together.

CHARLES

Christ. Round three.

He scampers away again, leaving his glass.

SANDRA

(to herself)
We'll just fucking see about that, little Miss Jeannie.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - DAY

Jeannie, slumped in a customer chair, feet up. She flicks a paperback with idle reflection.

DARREN (O.S.)

What you reading?

Jeannie squints at his question, points to the cover.

JEANNIE

'Conquer. Your. Dreams'. It's a Beginner's Guide to Sleep Activity.

She fake smiles, goes back to her Guide.

Darren stands like a dummy, goes to speak.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
I don't know yet, do I?

Sandra, sharp, focused, approaches.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Darren and Jeannie, hustled in by Sandra, busy themselves.

Sandra, over industrious, inspects and straightens.

Jeannie glances at Darren, scrapes a chair to make him look over. She winks at him. He looks away, keeps working.

Exasperated, she shakes her head.

Sandra notices the exchange. She moves, all too obviously, to block their vision of each other, closing on --

-- Jeannie.

SANDRA
I want you to go and see the
kitchen. I need the evening menu
double checked. Then can you...

Darren furtively watches while working.

Jeannie nods, does as she's told, walks away. Sandra turns to face him. Her mouth twitches, eyes gain warmth.

He gawps back, unsure.

She closes the distance with swaying hips.

His face gets serious, alive with expectation.

Sandra takes Darren's hand in both of hers, uncurls the cutlery from it. She moves right up against him as she scatters knives and forks onto the carefully dressed table.

They stare into each other's eyes, breathe deeply. She puts one finger on his chest, whispers.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I'll see you later.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sandra, almost undressed, stands grinning before Darren.

Propped on an elbow in bed, he watches her step daintily towards him, unclip her bra, shimmy out of her knickers.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Sunlight floods across glittering cutlery, glimmering glass.

Darren, an air of mysterious calm, works the room.

Charles ambles through, a paunched crab between furniture. He chooses a collision course with the table Darren's at.

Darren's elbow nudges a glass. It falls, but doesn't break.

CHARLES

Good job we're not on a ship, isn't
it, young man?

Darren retrieves the glass, wonders what the hell that means.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - DAY

Darren serves al fresco breakfasts to leathered up bikers.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Jeannie on desk duty. Bored, fidgety.

Under the desk, her hand slides a cigarette from its pack.

PAUL THE POSTMAN (O.S.)

Morning!

PAUL THE POSTMAN jaunts up the Reception entrance steps.

Jeannie palms the ciggie.

JEANNIE

Morning, Paul.

He cheerfully dumps a stack of mail down.

PAUL THE POSTMAN

Almost done. These!

He produces two slim, expensive looking white packages.

PAUL THE POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Just need your signature, and here.

Jeannie squiggles. Paul, impeccably happy, scoots off.

Jeannie flips the two packages. Blank. Apart from copperplate handwriting:- 'Sandra', and 'Charles'.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles pores over figures in studious silence.

A preliminary knock. Charles waves --
 -- Darren in, through the open door.

CHARLES
 Darren! Darren.

Darren brightly fronts it into Charles' den.

DARREN
 Hi, boss.

CHARLES
 Yeah, come on in. Take a seat, son.

Charles indicates the chair, right next to his. They sit, facing, uncomfortably close, practically knee to knee.

Darren gives a goofy look of confidence. Charles beams back, looking crazier by the second.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 Darren.

DARREN
 Yes.

CHARLES
 You're here.

Darren nods. Unaware. Now, slightly unsure.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 You... aware... what Sandra and I are about, Darren?

Darren plays along, a bit assertive.

DARREN
 Sure. I think it's pretty clear.

Charles, amused, stiffens, stifles a full preen.

CHARLES
 Good, and what's clear about it?

DARREN
 Hotel.

Charles cocks an ear, waiting.

DARREN (CONT'D)
 And... we're doing hotel, hotel - Hospitality!

Charles settles in, holds Darren's rabbit in his headlights.

CHARLES
Slightly more than that.

INT: HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sandra bounds along, holding the stack of mail left by Paul. The two white packages are separate.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

She bursts in.

CHARLES
(to Darren)
Tonight. That's settled, then.

SANDRA
They're here.

She falters as she finds --

-- Charles, fixated, lecturing Darren from his laptop spreadsheet. Darren is glazed over.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Oh. Could you give us a minute,
please, Sunshine?

Charles grunts, clicks his mouse.

Darren hesitates, then only too pleased, climbs past Sandra for the door. Stone cold, she shuts it after him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Sumer Ball! Invitations! Yes!

CHARLES
Oh. Right. Fabulous.

She won't be deflated.

SANDRA
Let's go shopping. Come on. Come
on, let's go. I'll drive.

Charles stares glumly at his screen. His face turns, acknowledges, but his eyes can't leave the screen.

Sandra waits, ignored, like a disrespected teacher.

Finally, he shoves the laptop round to show her.

She looks, a little surprised, can't help a flicker of lust.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Beautiful. Do we really need a
 Rolls Royce?

Charles turns his screen back, gazes, sighs longingly.

CHARLES
 I believe it's the right time.

SANDRA
 How much?

He seizes her thread.

CHARLES
 Can we afford not to! Just think,
 out front, guests arriving. Don't
 mind paying that bit more with one
 of those sitting in the car park.

Sandra seems to consider his statement, but warily. Sadly.

SANDRA
 Fine. I'm going to be gone for a
 couple of hours.

She pecks his forehead, wafts out of the door from him.

INT: HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sandra skitters along like a merry widow.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT/LOBBY - DAY

Sandra speedily ferries vases of flowers to vantage points.

Darren and Jeannie sleepily assist.

SANDRA
 ... so Darren, if you go and start
 the car now, I'll be out front in
 two minutes.

Darren gives an apologetic look to --

-- Jeannie, silently fuming.

DARREN
 Okay, Sandra.
 (to Jeannie)
 See ya.

He trots off.

Sandra takes a cheery moment. Admires her floral displays.

EXT: STAFF CAR PARK - DAY

Darren sits in Sandra's Range Rover, scowls at the dash.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

His fingers continuously attempt to turn the ignition, stab at the 'START/STOP' button.

EXT: HOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

Sandra gracefully alights her flight of steps, to --

-- no car.

A discreet glance at her little gold watch. She investigates: a cautious gait round to the side driveway.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Darren, furiously confused at his own ineptitude.

DARREN
Come on, you fat bastard.

He twists, prods.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Suit your fucking self, then.

The passenger door whooshes open. Darren jolts round.

Sandra stands at the door, confused for a second, watches his peculiar impotence. He looks to her, wrestles the car.

Her eyes smile in realisation. She climbs in next to him.

He's humiliated in the face of obstinate technology.

Her fingers rest on his knee. He stops twitching.

SANDRA
Press the brake.

She puts her hand in the air, demonstrating. Dabs one finger on the 'START/STOP' button.

The dash needles jump, throttle clears its throat.

Darren chills. Sandra releases a warm little laugh.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - LATER DAY

Darren slows at a junction.

SANDRA
Take a right, Driver.

Darren, enjoying the fancy car, spins the wheel, accelerates.
The world flies past them.

Sandra shifts back in her seat, easy with herself.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Go left.

He does, onto a grassy bridle path.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Slow, and park.

DARREN
Here?

SANDRA
Yes. Here's perfect.

EXT: BRIDLE PATH - DAY

The big tyres roll to a soft stop.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

They sit, stare straight ahead, anywhere but each other.

Sandra, first to turn her head, stares madly at him.

He looks out the corner of his eye. They lunge.

MOMENTS LATER - Sandra, all over Darren.

DARREN
So, we're not going shopping, then?

SANDRA
You'd rather go shopping?

She laughs with him, low and close.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Later. I've got something much more
important to do first.

She buzzes the seat back, pulls him across the centre console
onto her. Lifts her skirt and wraps her legs round him.

They kiss ravenously, grinding hips.

DARREN
Oh, God. Oh, yes.

SANDRA
Get these down.

She yanks at his nasty uniform trousers. Holds him closer, nibbles his lip as he squirms in the footwell.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Pull them across.

They pause, a delectable moment, then, he pushes into her. Her eyes widen, his brow drops. They relax and arch together.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Ooh, that's it. That - is -
gorgeous!

Darren ogles her, spread out, groaning beneath him. He's bewildered, but too greedy to stop.

EXT: BRIDLE PATH - DAY

The car rocks on its suspension, muffled ecstasy from inside. A human shaped blur of lycra flashes by.

BLUR OF LYCRA (O.S.)
Dear me.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Sandra shudders, screams quietly. Darren heaves across her. They slow, slow. Kisses, panting, sighs and caresses.

SANDRA
Right. Let's go.

Darren, sleepy eyed, nods.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra and Charles prep dinner, noisy, efficient together.

Wine pours.

Oven slams.

Oil flashes ablaze in the pan, shuffled enjoyably by Charles.

Sandra's hearing picks something out. Her head flicks.

She prods Charles.

SANDRA
I think there's someone at -

CHARLES
 Ah, shit, yeah. Invited your
 Darren. Okay, isn't it?

Sandra stares intensely at the back of Charles' head. Her
 wheels are turning. Aware, he turns round.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 Bit involved here, darling.

She nods, engages back to the new normal.

HALL, MOMENTS LATER - Sandra awkwardly welcomes Darren. A
 cold hug. They shuffle to the kitchen. Charles, working the
 pan, a cursory wave.

Darren is led by Sandra into --

-- THE LIVING ROOM. His eyes fall to her backside, then to --

-- NICHOLAS, 19, a rugby playing, tousle haired, languid
 example of Mankind, sprawled on a couch.

SANDRA
 Darren, you remember Nicholas?
 Charles' -

DARREN
 Yeah. Hi, Nic.

Smart hand shake. Darren does the lean in.

NICHOLAS
 Darren. How are you?

SANDRA
 (to Darren)
 Nicholas.
 (to Nicholas)
 Nicholas. Why don't you, er, show,
 um, Darren...

Both teens give her a curious look.

NICHOLAS
 For fuck's sake, Sandra.

She bursts out laughing. Nerves dissolve.

SANDRA
 Glass of wine, then. Red?

Nicholas, patronising, nods.

DARREN
 Yes, please.

Darren flops adjacent to Nicholas. They watch the TV.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra, Darren, Charles and Nicholas, seated evenly around a mahogany oval. They pass dishes, pour wine, busy, familiar.

SANDRA

Oh, I wanted those crystal goblets.
They're upstairs.

She looks to the men, fixed on food. She settles on --

-- Darren. He obediently napkins his mouth.

HALL/STAIRCASE - He follows her from the Dining Room: sensible, reverent. They round the corner, ascend the stairs.

Sandra glances back at him, blows a seriously wicked kiss.

She dashes deftly up the stairs. Darren, after her, far too quick for Sandra.

He softly slaps her backside. 'Caught', she spins, face lit, inviting. A quick kiss, they lower themselves to the landing.

Sandra positions Darren on top of her. Looks into his eyes, deeply confirming what's happening.

She hitches her skirt, unbuckles his jeans. Shoves, drags them away with her palms and heels.

They buck in small motions, breath sharp, shallow, staccato. Her nails find his backside.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Ssh. Oh. God. Ssh, ssh.

She rolls him onto his back, straddles his waist.

DINING ROOM - Charles and Nicholas, oblivious, tuck into their beef.

STAIRS - Sandra and Darren, slow against each other. Sandra rolls carefully beneath him again. Jaws clench.

Sandra beams at him.

His head nestles into her neck. She strokes his back, kisses his hair and shoulders. Content. She looks up, notices --

-- a patchy section of paintwork on the ceiling.

She tuts, clicks back to a panicky rush, pushes him away.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra, straight and smooth again, leads Darren through.

She proudly presents a goblet to each man.

CHARLES

You two been all the way to Italy?

Seats resumed, Sandra, sparkly eyed, seems amused by Charles.

Darren, spent, half laughs.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

The cheap stereo blasts early Black Sabbath.

Chef plates a Herculean breakfast with rehearsed care.

CHARLES (O.S.)

Morning!

Chef gives a quick, mid distance stare, stays cool. He sees --

-- Charles, stretched impatiently across the service counter.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hey. Slide over whatever's open,
would you?

CHEF

Morning, Boss. Here you go.

Chef stoops, bobs back up, half a bottle of Chianti.

CHARLES

Ah! Perfection. Cheers.

Charles swerves off again. Calls back to Chef.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And get some Def Leppard on. Bit of
class in your life, you tasteless
bugger.

Chef stares once more, meditates himself back in the zone.

Charles' head pops back round the door.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Or -

CHEF

Shit!

CHARLES

Ha, caught you. Yeah, better yet...
Bon Jovi. Yeah? Yeah.

Charles is gone. Chef shakes his head in despair.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - LATER DAY

Blinds drawn, Charles dozes off, glass of vino on his desk.
Darren oozes in the open door, slides silently past Charles.
Charles opens one eye. Vocalises.

DARREN

Hi. Sandra says do you have her car
keys. She's going to the Cash and
Carry.

Charles hardly moves. He swings the bunch of keys. Darren
grabs them from the air. Charles settles back to sleep.

EXT: STAFF CAR PARK - DAY

The Range Rover engine starts. Sandra finishes her cigarette,
grinds it out under her shoe.

With forced composure, she clambers in the passenger side.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Sandra and Darren exchange a look of calm conspiracy. She
motions ahead.

SANDRA

Let's go.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wrapped in bed together, Darren strokes Sandra's arm.
Sandra's expression: post coital anguish kicks in.

SANDRA

You should find someone your own
age. Just for you.

He's offended.

DARREN

I don't want 'someone'. I want you.

He holds her tighter. She relaxes a little. Slight smile.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Just you.

He kisses her shoulders, chest. Up her neck, across to her
lips. They twist around each other to make love.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles, calculator and laptop, sifts through figures. Summer light beats through his open windows, with overheard chat.

JEANNIE (O.S.)

Want a fag?

Charles huffs and puffs, keeps working.

INTERCUT: HOTEL GROUNDS/OFFICE - DAY

Darren and Jeannie, snuck behind a wall, light up their rollies. Jeannie blows smoke high, eyes Darren's physique.

Darren inhales his zap of nicotine, smiles a thank you.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

You're welcome. So, what do you do when you're not dropping dishes?

Charles' ears prick up.

Darren faces the Sun.

DARREN

Ah, you know, usual. Out on the lash. Dance, too. I'm a Dancer.

Charles tuts.

JEANNIE

No shit. There's fuck all round here, dancing wise. You'd be a novelty. Of course, the village lads'll kick your head in. Plenty of boozers, though. Cost a packet, just like this fucker does.

Charles, frozen, still eavesdropping.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Dancing all by yourself, then.

She nudges him, gives the 'wanker' sign.

DARREN

I'm a proper Dancer. You know, ballet, modern, tap. All that.

Charles suppresses laughter.

JEANNIE

So what're you doing this bollocks for?

Concern flickers across Darren's face: good question.

Sandra elegantly presents in the office, door flung wide. Moving air rattles the windows.

Darren and Jeannie jump, glance to the window. Jeannie nips her ciggie, straightens herself.

Darren, slower, follows suit. She grabs his wrist. They dash back to work.

They catch Sandra's eye. She regards them suspiciously from the window. Charles tracks her, swivelling in his chair.

CHARLES

Your lad seems to be flat broke.

SANDRA

Oh? And how would you -

CHARLES

Sandra, darling. The Command Centre. I see all. I hear all.

Smug, he clicks up the Rolls Royce again, drools at it.

Sandra, a mix of apprehension and pity, puts her hand on his shoulder. A moment later, ignored, she removes it.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

People expect to see a a car like that at a place like this. Gives them...

He turns to explain. Sandra's gone.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(to himself)
... comfort. They've made the right choice.

INT: STAFF QUARTERS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Darren, smoking, leans in the doorway to his room. He gives a sly look along the passage.

Jeannie's door, open, just a crack.

He pushes himself off, toward her room.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Darren gently pushes her door.

Jeannie's lying on her back on the bed, watching TV with the sound off. She looks up, nods hello.

DARREN

Hi. What you watching?

JEANNIE

Hugh Jackman. Fucking lush.

DARREN

Oh, yeah. Seen this. My tutor bangs on about it. He is good, though. Really puts the work in.

Jeannie's forefinger taps the button of her jeans.

Her little belly inflates. Her fingernails drag, beating a steady tattoo on the seam.

They continue to watch the dancing on TV. Darren's attention shifts to Jeannie clawing across her crotch.

He watches --

-- her, watching Hugh, her hand clicking at her jeans.

He screws his eyes shut, heaves a nerve filled sigh.

DARREN (CONT'D)

See you, then.

He aims for the door.

JEANNIE

Unh? Uh-huh. Close the door, mate.

Her eyes don't leave the tele until the door is closed, Darren on the outside.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Daft fucker.

CORRIDOR - Darren takes his time back to his room, steps back and forth to an imaginary soundtrack.

He spins into his room, one foot snapping the door shut. Spins, real cool, spins again. Stops.

There, in his bed, naked, is Sandra, all teeth and eyes.

SANDRA

Hello.

He goes all dreamy.

DARREN

Hi.

She remembers something, pops up in bed. She fishes in her bag, places a handful of bank notes on his bedside table.

Darren, undressing, slows down.

SANDRA
It's just an advance. So you have
to work it back.

DARREN
Do I - I mean, thanks.

SANDRA
Certainly you do not have to, if
you feel funny about it. I'll leave
it there.

He hesitates, stark naked, except for his socks.

Sandra looks him up and down, her eyes shining.

He hastily removes the rest of his clothes. Walks past the
cash to join her.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - LATER NIGHT

Sandra and Darren, exhausted bliss. Limbs intertwined,
foreheads touching. Ghostly quiet.

Sandra murmurs to him.

SANDRA
Don't go to sleep.

His eyelids flutter as he falls into slumber.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Don't let me fall asleep.

And she does the same. There they lay, caught in each other's
arms for all the world to see.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Darren, diligently laying tables. Sandra sashays through.
They smile for each other. Head down, she trots to the Lobby.

Alone, he gets back to work. He pauses, aware that --

-- someone has appeared nearby. Jeannie stands there, really
scowling at him, hands either side of her head.

He quizzically peers back at her.

JEANNIE
I'm helping you.

He looks about for Jeannie's help to manifest itself.

She continues to transmit help at Darren.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
It works. Watch. It's working.

Closes her eyes, intently serene.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
You feel it.

Darren, astounded. She flops.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Ugh! Doesn't always work. It's you.
You're blocking it.

DARREN
Mm-hmm.

She giggles.

JEANNIE
Fucking... blocker!

Jeannie skips off.

Sandra, secretly watching again from the Lobby, looking sad.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Darren power cleans the last tables.

Charles ambles in, unnoticed as usual. The days take stashed under one arm, carafe of red under the other.

Darren shoots a glimpse, keeps cleaning.

Charles turns one of Darren's clean glasses right way up. Sloshes wine into it. Drains the glass.

Leaves it with the carafe.

Darren spots the extra work. They ignore each other, until side by side. Charles presents a palm in Darren's path.

CHARLES
Grab a bottle of Merlot, young man.

DARREN
Right you are, Charles.

Darren darts off. Charles waits in a morose silence.

The wine changes hands. Charles gives a boozy, dead smile, ambles off. Darren bristles, snatches up the dirty glass.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Guests mill reservedly, each more important than the last.

Muffled car doors thump from outside. The sound of tinkling glasses from somewhere gets closer.

Darren carries a tray of shimmering goblets to the Welcome Bar in the corner. Gently places it, a final chord chiming, on top of the bar.

He transfers glasses to shelves.

Jeannie, on Reception, smiles to and fro. Her attention diverts to Darren, back to the Guests. She smiles, glances, staples, files, glances at --

-- Darren, twisting, half pirouettes, storing the glasses.

Her hand slows, hovers above the stapler.

Her eyes, unblinking, adore his smoothness. Sandra's smart footsteps echo through. Jeannie lands the stapler down again.

Sandra flows across the Lobby, smiles excitedly at Jeannie.

Jeannie, mystified, smiles back.

Sandra moves into the bar, next to Darren. She appears to be checking the lower shelves, her back to him. He continues to rotate, hands full of glasses.

Jeannie staples, files. Guests filter out, leaving the Lobby empty, apart from the three Staff.

Darren notices Sandra's suit covered backside, bobbing before him. His twist rate slows to admire her.

His eyes rest, floating over her. He stops moving altogether.

Jeannie, staples, files, staples.

Darren exhales heavily as his finger traces a line across Sandra's skirt, up one buttock. Her thighs jolt, but she stays bent double.

He opens his hand, digs his palm into her bottom.

She straightens up, happily serious. Turns to him. His eyes smirk into her. Sandra flashes pretend annoyance back at him.

She nudges into him with her hips as she inches past.

SANDRA
(whispers)
Stop it.

He shrugs innocence. They part, Sandra with a keen wiggle.

Jeannie's hand staples. Her little machine is empty.

She looks up to see --

-- Sandra, smoothing herself down, step away from the bar. Darren, chest expanding, wide eyed, gets back to work.

Jeannie wears a baffled little scowl.

INT: HOTEL MAIN BAR - NIGHT

A busy summer evening session under way.

Sandra glad hands Guests. She sees a couple of guys approach the bar. Both overcompensate their lack of sobriety.

Jeannie, behind the bar, changes bottles on the optics.

The DRUNKS openly enjoy ogling her efforts from behind.

PRE LAP - The hissing sound of a dishwasher cycle ending.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Busy, wall to wall noise of radio and cooking. Darren yawns, speed-stacks hot plates from the dishwasher.

CHEF

Aw, you tired, mate?

DARREN

Pretty tired, thanks. Does it ever get not busy?

He slides another tray of plates into the washer.

CHEF

Yeah. About five minutes, mid October. Come back then.

Chef, cheerful with himself. Darren slams the dishwasher.

INT: HOTEL MAIN BAR - NIGHT

Sandra, protectively fixated on the two Drunks.

SANDRA

(to charmed Guests)
Excuse me a moment.

She makes a path through her civilised patrons, inserts herself behind the bar. Intercepts the two guys.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

What can I get you, gentlemen?

DRUNK #1 gives Sandra a disappointed, annoyed look.

DRUNK #1
You? Nothing, sweetheart. Thanks.

His friend sniggers, slaps Drunk #1's shoulder.

Sandra, her friendliest, ice cold face.

SANDRA
I'm very sorry, Sir, the bar is now
only open to Guests of the Hotel.
Would you mind making your -

DRUNK #2 is horrified if the bar's shut. Drunk #1 discards
£20 notes at her.

DRUNK #1
We'll be guests. Book us in, and
give us two pints. Now. Please.

Jeannie spectates near her boss.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Charles pauses tapping his keyboard, sighs as he sees --
-- his empty wine glass. He tuts, shuffles out of his chair.

INT: MAIN BAR - NIGHT

Other Guests notice the stand off. It's unpleasant for them.

JEANNIE
I don't mind, Sandra. They've been
on a tab.

Sandra fans her hand for Jeannie to shush.

The cash lays on the bar.

DRUNK #1
Yeah, Sandra. We're on a tab.

SANDRA
We are now closed, Sir. And,
regrettably, full for the night.
Guests only, I'm afraid.

DRUNK #1
Afraid? Are you? Bloody afraid?

A half touched whisky is placed on the bar next to Drunk #1.
Drunk #1 clocks it. He turns in disbelief to --

-- its GENTLEMAN GUEST owner, palms framed in appeasement.

GENTLEMAN GUEST

Lads, you've been told -

Drunk #2 whips round on him, finger jabbing.

DRUNK #2

Piss off, you! Nobody's asking you.

Gentleman Guest is arrested by the vehemence of Drunk #2's challenge. From behind him, calmly, steps Charles. He ever so politely ushers Gentleman Guest to one side.

CHARLES

I'll take care of this.

A natural pause as attention shifts.

All eyes turn to see --

-- Charles: dynamic. Ready.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(to the Drunks)

Right, lads. You, and you, get the fuck out.

DRUNK #1

(sizes Charles up)

Or?

Charles' eyes pop. Teeth glint. Fists tighten. He shakes. A contained roar comes, gleeful fury through clenched teeth.

CHARLES

'Or?' Fucking... 'Or?' Don't you fucking 'Or?' me, you sappy looking cunt.

Drunk #2 squares up.

Charles, lightning fast, palm strike, breaks Drunk #2's nose. Crack! He wheels back, arms reeling.

He lands on his backside.

Drunk #1 swings. Charles bobs, blocks, steps sideways, stamp kicks Drunk #1's knee.

Cartilage tears. Drunk #1 screams, agonised reality.

Drunk #2, furious, bloodied, eyes watering, flails up again.

Charles is transformed: an empty eyed beast, bent on satisfaction through violence. He advances on Drunk #2, still blinking.

Charles' gaze makes a tiny flicker, at --

-- Sandra, terrified.

Charles reins it in. A wave of his hand to Drunk #2 indicates Drunk #1, writhing and whimpering on the floor.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 (to Drunk #2)
 Keep going?

Drunk #2 stops dead.

DRUNK #2
 Nah, mate. You're okay.

Darren, a tray of clean glasses, strolls through, just in time to see the Drunks hobble off. He stops in the silence.

Sandra, truly horrified, looks from Charles to Darren.

EXT: COUNTY HOSPITAL CAR PARK - DAY

Sandra's Range Rover crawls through the busy car park.

INT: HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

Sandra and her mother, MILLIE, 57, a dignified, even more elegant version of her dear daughter. They sit, side by side, across a desk from Mille's Specialist.

The name plate, next to a box of Kleenex, reads 'Chief Oncologist'.

CHIEF ONCOLOGIST explains to the ladies in officious gestures.

Sandra and Millie, blank and sad, continue to listen.

Sandra looks round to console her mother who stares at the floor. Sandra calmly grasps Millie's hand in hers.

They smile at each other with mutual sympathy.

EXT: HOSPITAL CAR PARK - DAY

Sandra, supporting, walks Mille to the Range Rover.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

They motor along in silence. Millie already has a new intensity in life. Her eyes, wondrous, drink the world in.

MILLIE
 Well. I suppose that's that.

SANDRA
It's your choice. I love you and
whatever you want to do is what
we'll do. You're not dead yet, Mum.

MILLIE
Jesus.

SANDRA
But for now, let's just go and have
some fucking fun.

She gets the laugh she was after from Millie.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Speaking of which...

Should she? Now? Sandra decides.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I've been having a bit of an
affair.

Millie, more impressed than surprised.

MILLIE
Have you? Have you really?

Sandra nods, serious, looks for the reaction. She steers
through traffic.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
Come on, then, love. Who's the
lucky fellah?

Sandra's seriousness develops into excitement.

SANDRA
Remember Beverly?

MILLIE
Sandra! Really!

SANDRA
What? No, not - Jesus, Mum. Not
Bev. It's her son, Darren.

MILLIE
Little Darren. But isn't he -

SANDRA
- seventeen. He's seventeen.

They keep driving, the days news revolving, sinking in.

MILLIE
At least one of us is having some
fucking fun.
(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I'm happy for you, Sandra, love. If that's what you want, I'm genuinely very happy.

SANDRA

Thanks. It is.

Confirmed.

MILLIE

Seventeen.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sandra and Darren, entwined in bed, still panting. Sandra takes a sly peep at her wristwatch. She stirs in the sheets.

He flips up and over her, supports himself on top. Hips find their places, gyrate beneath the covers.

He kisses her mouth to keep her quiet.

DARREN

Five minutes.

Her hands arch into talons, drag his backside. They close to fists, knurling him closer.

Sandra and Darren continue their gentle, longing lovemaking.

SANDRA

Okay. Five minutes is up.

She pushes him clear, wriggles from the bed. He sulks.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

It's figurative, not literal.

He gives her a chuckle.

EXT: TOWN CENTRE - DAY

'Town' is a group of shops, cafes, a Tourist Info Centre. An estate agent window, mobbed by types in anoraks.

Day trippers' cars crawl, take photos from wound down car windows. Sandra's car weaves through the clogged traffic.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Darren drives, focused like he's in a rally car.

Sandra, next to him, cringes, one eye shut as they lunge forth. She grips the door handle and seat, but she's electrified by it.

They race along. Sandra brings her head round, watches him. It gives her a glow.

She nods to the road ahead.

SANDRA
Just here. I'll be five minutes.

Darren coasts the car, cautious. He keeps going.

DARREN
It's all double yellows.

SANDRA
Just park. I won't be that long.

DARREN
You can't park on double yellows.
It's obstruction. It's dangerous.

SANDRA
You can. Just park.

DARREN
I'll find a space.

SANDRA
Darren, I've done it a thousand times. Everybody does. It's five bloody minutes in the Accountants. Just park.

DARREN
I'll get a ticket.

Amused by his integrity, her hand settles on his knee.

SANDRA
I'll pay it if you do. Now, park, please, because I'm not walking.

Exasperated, he swerves in, onto --

EXT: HIGH STREET - DAY

-- double yellow lines. The sound of the handbrake cranks.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Sandra unclips her seatbelt, wriggles across, hand higher on his thigh.

SANDRA
Thank you.

He tingles, but taps his watch. She stays near him, her weight on his leg. His head jerks round to hers, to complain.

She darts in, kisses his mouth. He's still wound tight. Sandra kisses him again, slower, moves his lips until he softens. His head and arms go to her. She pulls away.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Right. Five minutes.

Darren, partnerless, mid snog.

Sandra grabs a transparent document wallet from the footwell. Stuffs it in her Mulberry. Life insurance papers poke out.

Her door swings open, thumps shut.

He's left watching her stride around the front of the car.

She gives him an intense look, blows a voluminous kiss.

Darren is no longer focused on double yellows.

EXT: HOTEL - NIGHT

Howling gusts of wind sweep over the grounds.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lamplit, Sandra and Darren lie cosily in bed together, stroke each other's skin. She shifts, lays herself across him.

They listen to the alien chaos outside, snuggle, nuzzling.

He runs his fingers through the sheen of her hair. Kisses her head. She caresses the smoothness of his chest and shoulders.

DARREN

I love you.

She stops.

He continues to mess with her hair. The suddenness of their new plight shows on her face. She sits straight up, gives him a concerned look.

SANDRA

You just think you do.

He's unapologetic.

DARREN

If I think I do, then I do. My thoughts, that's what I feel.

She gets theatrical, leaves the bed, gathers clothes.

SANDRA
I was afraid of this.

DARREN
Afraid?

SANDRA
You're too young to be in love,
especially with an old hag like me.

Darren is horrified.

DARREN
What? Don't go yet.

He climbs out of bed, embraces her. The wind screeches, taps branches at the small window.

She pushes him away, but just a little.

They recline back onto the bed. Darren kisses all over her neck, shoulders, breasts. She kisses him back, clenching him.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Just stay.

SANDRA
I can't. You say 'Dont' go', but
I'll have to sometime.

DARREN
But you could stay.

SANDRA
Yes, I could, but -

DARREN
Ssh.

They continue making love. Wind blasts, rattles the catches.

SANDRA
And I love you, too.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Darren and Jeannie, laying tables as usual. A moment of calm.

Jeannie gives him a sideways look, a tiny lopsided smile.

He smiles back, polite enough.

They work round a table, edging toward each other. Side by side, closer still. Jeannie presses into him.

Her pinky strokes his hand on the table.

Darren just freezes.

She keeps going, covers up his hand. She locks eyes, glides to his face. He edges back.

Jeannie tenses, straightens a step back herself, as if waiting for an explanation.

DARREN

Sorry.

Jeannie, contemptuous, looks him up and down. Then it's gone.

JEANNIE

Whatever. Never know 'til you try.

Darren, ashamed, confused.

DARREN

It's not that I don't -

Jeannie's heels click curtly away from him.

He's left, handfuls of cutlery, eyes to Heaven.

Sandra, observing unseen, silently slips away.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sandra gets dressed in unhappy silence. She puts her clothes on like she's punishing them.

Darren, in bed, watches her.

DARREN

Why can't I go instead of him? Why do you even have to go? Doesn't sound like Charles wants to go.

Sandra buttons, zips, slips shoes on.

SANDRA

Charles is invited. I am invited. It's the Summer Ball. We're expected to be seen there. As a couple.

Her explanation, too full, hurts Darren. She can see it. She sits by him, strokes his face.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, darling. I really am.

He sulks.

DARREN

Say you're sick.

She sniggers.

SANDRA
It's not like skipping school.

DARREN
I've left school.

He recoils, turns his back.

Sandra stops, stands up. She solemnly contemplates this boy.

INT: HOTEL GUEST WING CORRIDOR - DAY

In the midday emptiness, the sound of a towel being flipped.

Sandra's court shoes echo, ascending bare stairs. She flows through on her daily rounds, footsteps now muffled on carpet.

The flapping sound, intermittent, continues, inviting her.

INT: GUEST ROOM - DAY

Darren stands, folding fresh towels onto a neatly made bed. Sandra glances in the door as she stalks past behind him.

Her head pops angrily back around the door jamb.

SANDRA
What on Earth is going on here?

Darren keeps flapping, folding, laying towels.

DARREN
This.

Like some emergency, she dashes, saves the towel from Darren.

SANDRA
Don't tell me you've never folded a bloody towel before.

She yanks, whips the towel into a cute bundle. Darren laughs.

Sandra looks at him sharply, hand on hip, waves across the ones Darren did. He stops laughing.

Slowly, he clumsily mimics her example. It's not great.

She pulls a disappointed face, turns to leave.

DARREN
Sorry, Sandra.

INT: CORRIDOR - DAY

Tight lipped, with worried eyes, Sandra shakes her head.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Jeannie, doing her best with a hot day and too many people.

Sunlight pours across the busy Reception desk. Jeannie's welcoming smile gives over to a harassed one.

Sandra slides in from nowhere, helps out. Jeannie gives her an appreciative look. Sandra looks through her.

They deal with Guest after Guest, efficiently, but kindly.

Registration cards, credit cards, key cards, changing hands.

A particularly GAUDY GUEST, aloof, is next. Jeannie shrinks.

Sandra's smile never fades. Recognising Gaudy Guest, she retrieves an antiquated signing in book.

Gaudy Guest's face cracks with delight.

Sandra flattens out crumpled cash from Gaudy Guest's hand. Jeannie assists as Gaudy Guest wafts off into the Hotel.

And --

-- the Lobby, once again without a paying soul. Sandra turns to face Jeannie, a mentor to the fool. She pushes the old book round next to the new one.

SANDRA

Look at this.

JEANNIE

Oh, yeah. Mister and Missus -

SANDRA

No, Jeannie, love. Different inks.

JEANNIE

Oh... I'm sorry, Sandra. We never use it.

SANDRA

It looks a mess.

JEANNIE

Yeah...

Another HIPSTER COUPLE have arrived at the desk. They wait, quiet, uncomfortably observe the public telling off.

SANDRA

It's my fault, I suppose. I'll
supply more pens. Fountain nib, and
black, not fifty shades of blue.
But you must keep me informed.

Jeannie, shamed, nods. She turns to serve the hipsters.

Sandra, fuming quietly, makes tiny red crosses next to the
incorrect inks.

Jeannie, humiliated, wipes a tear. She turns her back on
everyone, sniffles.

Sandra, further put out, takes over without looking up.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'll be with you in one moment.

Hipster Couple, incredulous, walk away.

Sandra closes her eyes, then she watches them go. She pulls a
handkerchief from her pocket. Offers it to Jeannie.

EXT: VILLAGE BUNGALOW - DAY

Sandra's Range Rover, parked at the kerb.

INT: MILLIE'S BUNGALOW - DAY

Sandra rests in a high back chair amid a lifetime's treasure.
She watches --

-- Millie, asleep in a hospital bed, pain relief feed in her
arm, breathing tube in her nostrils.

Sparse traffic: cars, kids, can still be heard from outside.

Millie's eyelids flicker to waking. She's weak, but stubborn.

MILLIE

Hello, flower.

SANDRA

Cup of tea?

Moments later, Sandra edges back in, cup and saucer in hand.

Millie, tearful, ashamed, looks up at her.

MILLIE

I'm so sorry.

Sandra lays the tea to one side.

SANDRA
It's okay, Mum. Come on.

INT: MILLIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Clean, but also crammed with bits and pieces. Sandra stuffs Millie's bedsheets into the washing machine.

She scrubs her hands in the kitchen sink, dries them.

Switches the kettle on. Brightens her smile.

INT: MILLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sandra and Millie sit, Millie propped up with fresh pillows in her clean sheets. They both sip tea.

SANDRA
Tea okay?

MILLIE
Yes. Lovely. Come on, flower, let's not discuss the sodding tea. How's your love life?

Millie gets back some of her old sparkle.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
How's the sex?

Girls together, they titter to each other.

Sandra gazes into her memories.

SANDRA
Amazing. Just fantastic. He's so young and smooth and fit. When, Mum, when he's fucking me, it's like being in a dream. Like flying. I just love it.

MILLIE
Well, I'm glad to hear it.

Sandra rescues Millie's tea, before it's dropped.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
(dozing off)
Good for you. Life's too short, you know.

Sandra gently clasps her mother's hand.

SANDRA
Thanks, Mum. I knew I could tell you.

Millie's thumb feebly strokes Sandra's hand. She drifts back to sleep.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Jeannie, covert, chats on the desk phone, cups the receiver.

She senses someone waiting to be served.

Jeannie finishes up her call, turns to --

-- the LADY FROM TASS: 30s, crisp, steely and sensible. She slides her business card to Jeannie.

Jeannie, caught off guard, picks up the phone again.

JEANNIE
 (to the phone)
 Charles, the Lady from TASS has
 arrived.

Charles responds at length.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
 Cameras. Yes. I will. Okay.
 (to the Lady from TASS)
 If you'll follow me, please.

LADY FROM TASS
 I can take care of myself.

She collects her briefcase from the floor, marches away.

As her heels click into the Hotel, Jeannie watches, rapt. Her expression runs from indignation, to jealousy, to admiration.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Sandra's Range Rover engine switches on.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Darren kisses Sandra's neck. She sinks in the passenger seat. His hand slides over, between her thighs.

INT/EXT: HOTEL - DAY

The Lady from TASS marches along, her eagle eyes flick, to --

-- the distant Range Rover.

She processes, heads straight on.

INT: SANDRA'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Sandra's eyes close, flutter open in surrendered ecstasy.

EXT: RANGE ROVER - DAY

Through the car window, Sandra's attention is drawn to some approaching menace. She panics, struggles against Darren.

INT: RANGE ROVER - DAY

Outside the window, Chef, agog, arms full of food packs, tries not to see. He steps this way and that. Beaten, he simply nods 'Hello', to --

-- Sandra, trapped, gives a feeble wave from her car.

Chef, poleaxed, rotates into a stiff legged retreat.

Darren catches on, looks pale.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Sandra, out of the car, scurries after Chef.

SANDRA
Fucking. Fuck it.

She speed walks. Chef zombies into his kitchen.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles hears Sandra's chase through his open window. Shifts in his chair. Decides she can deal with whatever's going on.

The Lady from TASS waltzes in.

CHARLES
Good morning!

The Lady from TASS replies with a knowing nod.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Chef, stricken, wanders to his oven. He fiddles, tries to be busy, checking what's where.

Jeannie, amused, watches him being zoned out.

JEANNIE
What the bloody hell's wrong with you?

Hypnotised, he stares into the oven burners flame.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Hey. Have you had a sly toot?

CHEF
I've just seen -

SANDRA (O.S.)
Alexander!

Jeannie whips round.

JEANNIE
Wow. Sunday names.

Sandra, flustered, shoots Jeannie a warning glance. She beckons Chef from the kitchen.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Sandra leads Chef, following reluctantly, out of earshot.

They head away from --

-- the Scene of the Crime, Darren still frozen inside --

-- to a quiet spot. Sandra, firm, authoritative, her hand on Chef's shoulder. Chef nods as if he's the culprit.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles hears Sandra mumble, Chef's compliance. He chuckles.

The Lady from TASS, amused by Charles' lack of comprehension, points to her brochure on Charles' desk. It shows --

-- clusters of floodlight security cameras.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Headlights douse in the driveway.

The side gate bangs open. Charles, sozzled, stumbles into an old barbecue, tips it over. Ash explodes across the lawn.

Sandra looms from the kitchen door.

SANDRA
Christ, Charles! Watch the bloody flowers.

CHARLES
Weren't we taking this piece of shit to the Hotel?

Sandra seethes.

SANDRA
Ugh. It's a fucking B and B.

CHARLES
BOU - TIQUE fucking B and B.
Boutique.

She despairs as Charles wobbles about. He aims past her, into the kitchen.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Speaking of which, -

Sandra hears a glass smash. She trudges in after him.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra holds Charles' slashed hand under the cold tap. He sips a glass of wine from his good hand.

SANDRA
What were you about to say? God,
this won't stop.

She places his arm over his head. He sways, sips. Sandra opens a drawer, gets the First Aid kit.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Charles.

He remembers she's there.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
(gives up)
Just give me your hand.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Jeannie spots --

-- a great dirty fingerprint inside a displayed wine glass. She snatches it up, polishes it.

She flinches at a clatter from the other side of the hall. Peeks from under her brow at --

-- Charles, bandaged hand, arms flapping at a cowed Darren. Charles picks cutlery from a table like it's sewage. Drops it back. He shakes a heavy finger at Darren.

Aged Diners, couples and foursomes, acknowledge the severity as serving the stupid boy right.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Get on with it, Jeannie.

Jeannie snaps to as Sandra trots by and out of earshot.

JEANNIE
(under her breath)
Conceited bitch.

Gaudy Guest overhears her, smirks, goes back to their soup.
Charles stomps away. Darren gives Jeannie a puppy dog shrug.
He shambles over to her. The room is deathly.

DARREN
Is it me?

His humiliation burns on his face.

JEANNIE
He's just... I don't know.

GAUDY GUEST
Predisposed to disliking you,
that's all. Old stag, young buck.

Darren's face registers - of course!

The other Aged Diners tut tut.

Jeannie taps Darren's nose, wiggles hers.

JEANNIE
Anyway, it's the Ball tonight. So
like as not, he won't be here
tomorrow.

EXT: BALL VENUE - NIGHT

An assortment of local big wigs arrive: Dinner Jackets,
Evening Gowns. They all don masques, to join the Venetian
parody.

In their midst, uptight, regular clothes, comes Darren.

INT: BALL VENUE - NIGHT

Darren edges through the crowd of well heeled Masqueraders.

Ahead of him, Charles, thinly disguised under an eye mask,
holds court. Sandra by his side, a slightly less recognisable
Egyptian cat.

Charles' circle breaks into social laughter as Darren
arrives. Charles graciously introduces him.

CHARLES

Darren? Everyone, this is our new waiter, Darren. His mum's been a friend of Sandra's for... quite a while, shall we say?

DARREN

Hi. Hello. Pleased to meet you.

Nods, smiles all round. Sandra, controlled, scans the group.

DARREN (CONT'D)

(to Charles)

I've got a message.

CHARLES

Really? I thought you might be here to give us a little twirl.

Charles leans in, wink and a grin, taking the piss.

Darren, business like, shakes his head.

DARREN

No, that's not the case. My Dance Instructor always drills it in: 'If people want to watch you dance, they can bloody well pay for it'.

A murmur of approval from Charles' friends. He himself is taken aback.

CHARLES

Instructor?

DARREN

Yeah. I'm going to be - No, I am a professional dancer.

Charles concedes a dab of admiration. Sandra gives her lower lip a sideways bite.

CHARLES

Quite right. Quite fucking right, son. Good for you.

Charles slaps Darren's back. Darren gives Sandra an arched eyebrow.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Stay for a drink. That message, wouldn't be about a certain motor car, would it?

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jeannie takes an order, feigns deference, saunters off to --

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

-- hand it to Chef. Darren follows, buttons his nasty shirt.

JEANNIE

Two Gespachio.

(to Darren)

Dear me. Dressed and everything.

Darren, very chipper, even in front of Chef.

Chef slides two soups to Darren, barehanded.

CHEF

Service.

Darren goes to grab them, then stops.

CHEF (CONT'D)

Gespachio, times two. Off you go.

Jeannie waits.

Chef waits.

Darren slowly takes each bowl, barehanded.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Darren lingers as Diners eat their Gespachio.

He shrinks off, puzzled, putting it together.

INT: BALL VENUE - NIGHT

Sandra sits, catatonic in a sea of revellers.

Charles, next to her, notices. He turns, faces her, up close.

She snaps out of it, forces a big smile, holds her glass up. They touch glasses. Charm switched on, she socialises aboard the table.

LATER NIGHT -

Charles dances with Sandra. Drunk enough to boogie and not give a shit, he latches after women on the dance floor.

Sandra, fed up with it, shouts in his ear, storms off.

At the bar, she takes a large gin and tonic.

LATER STILL -

Faster music. Charles' dancing has lost any flair it may once have possessed. He's far too touchy with the ladies.

Sandra, alone at the table, picks up her clutch bag.
She makes a bee line for the lobby.

INT: BALL VENUE LOBBY - NIGHT

The door swings shut on Sandra's back, already on her phone.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darren's phone lights up.

EXT: BALL VENUE - NIGHT

Darren pulls Sandra's Range Rover into the car park.
Sandra scampers past Audis and Jaguars, into darkness.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Morning hues swim across the Georgian facade.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM - DAY

The bed, unmade in the exquisitely furnished room. The sound of the shower running from the en suite, then turned off.

INT: EN SUITE - DAY

Charles, naked, bandaged hand, delicately brushes his teeth.

Behind him, Sandra steps elegantly from the shower cubicle.
He watches every inch of her in the mirror.

Sandra, hair up inside a towel, pats herself dry with another. She works down to her legs.

Charles brushes, watches.

She straightens, wraps the towel round herself. It's short.

Charles spits. He follows her out into the bedroom, clasps her warmly from behind. She gives a playful yelp.

Charles peels the towel away from her. She holds his hands, preventing him. He nuzzles her neck, along her shoulders.

Sandra's hands relax over Charles'. He casts the towel.

They frogmarch to the bed, Charles still behind her.

He rolls her onto her back, both smiling, engrossed. Sandra grabs his sides, pulls him close.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM - DAY

The sound of Sandra and Charles' calm, rhythmic sex.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - DAY

Darren lugs two bins of kitchen waste to a screened off area.

From an upper window, Sandra spots him.

Darren heaves the bins up, one at a time, inside the screens. Balanced, he shakes slop into bigger bins.

Behind him, Sandra trots down the garden to Darren. He turns, loses his grip on the bin. The slop cascades over Darren, spatters on the floor.

DARREN

Ah! Fuck me!

Sandra cringes, laughs to herself as she approaches.

Darren slams the bin about. Sandra creeps into the pen.

SANDRA

Take it easy.

He jumps, even at Sandra's velvet tone.

DARREN

Shitting - Jesus, sorry, Sandra.

She laughs quietly, gets closer, brushes something awful from his face. She hovers near his cheek to whisper.

SANDRA

You're still beautiful to me.

He moves to kiss. She steps back, alert, finger chastising.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

But you do need a shower.

She flashes her eyes at him, looks round, lowers her voice.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Don't you.

And cups his groin.

He gasps. Senses lifted to a higher state, he is hers.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Darkened with curtains drawn. The sound of shower spray.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM; SHOWER - DAY

Darren rinses suds from his torso. Sniffs himself. Soaps up again. The muffled sound of a door. Under the spray, he doesn't hear it.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Jeannie, wired, stands halfway through Darren's bedroom door.

Her eyes go from the running shower, to --

-- his phone on the bed.

Jeannie's hand perilously slides the screen to life.

Her face, eager, ghoulishly lit by the screen.

Her fingers tap, slide, nosing through. She hears footsteps approach the bedroom door, still ajar.

Jeannie scopes for somewhere to hide.

The footsteps pause. The door, pushed delicately open. Sandra's face, cautious, peers in, searching --

-- the spaces of the room.

She settles on the sound of the running shower.

INT: DARREN'S WINDOW - DAY

Jeannie, frozen, sucks herself thin behind the curtains.

Still clutching Darren's phone, she tilts her head for the view inside the room.

Between the gap in the curtains, she beholds --

-- Sandra, facing away, slip out of her blouse.

The aperture of Jeannie's eye opens completely.

Sandra, undressing, skips across the room to the shower.

Sloth speed, Jeannie pockets Darren's phone, takes hers out. She stretches from behind the curtains.

INT: DARREN'S SHOWER ROOM - DAY

Sandra, naked in the vapour, excitedly observes Darren, eyes shut, masturbating in the shower.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Jeannie, pulse racing, hears a shower curtain open and close. The low, intimate tones of the lovers float into the room.

INT: SHOWER ROOM - DAY

Steam billows out, to --

-- Jeannie, peeps round the side of the shower room door. She holds her phone up, camera lens revealed just enough.

Her phone screen relays unfolding events in real time. It's clear to anyone who knows them.

Sandra and Darren, screwing in the shower.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Light is cast from the corridor as Jeannie flees.

INT: CORRIDOR - DAY

Jeannie, acting guilty as hell, gasps. She brings Darren's phone from her pocket.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Light is cast from the corridor again. Darren's phone lands on the bed near where it had been.

Jeannie, alive with haste, pulls the door. Too hard.

INT: SHOWER - DAY

Sandra's head flicks round at the sound of the closed door. Instant panic. Darren distracts her back to lovemaking.

Duty bound, she steps back, swipes the curtain away.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

Jeannie skitters along.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Sandra manically towels her hair. Darren hovers, dripping.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Jeanie bursts in, rushes over to Chef, triumphantly holds up her phone.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - DAY

Sandra, dressed, stern, impeccable, runs from Darren's room.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Jeannie's phone in Chef's hand. Her finger taps 'PLAY'.

Chef, curious, watches, until he realises who it is. Shaking the responsibility from his hand, he passes the phone back.

Jeannie, jubilant, can't stay still. Chef gets back to work. She happily watches the clip again. Then, the idea hits her.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles, occupied, stack of paperwork. Content. Wine pours into Charles' glass.

He looks up, pleased to accept it. Sandra, attentive, hands him the glass. Her eyes meet --

-- the photo of Charles aged 19, with his first bride.

Sandra, overcome with guilt and relief, sighs heavily.

INT: CORRIDOR TO CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Sandra carefully makes it out of the office. She passes --

-- Jeannie, stomping towards it.

Sandra offers a gleaming grin of solidarity.

Jeannie meets her with acidity.

JEANNIE

The old Dreamboat made it in today?

Sandra, shaken again, keeps walking, heading away.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles sags at the sound of Jeannie's voice. He tops up his wine. There's a little knock at the door.

CHARLES
(to himself)
Shit.
(to Jeannie)
Sweetheart! What's going on?

She grows around the door and into his office.

Charles eases into his faux welcome, glass held high.

Jeannie clings to the wall, head back, teeth bared.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Are we fucking stoned or something?
I'm busy, girl.

JEANNIE
I ain't fucking stoned, Charlie.
Charles. You want me to tell you a
little secret? Charles?

He scowls at her, but he's intrigued.

INT: CORRIDOR TO CHARLES' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Charles, furious, expels Jeannie from his office.

He flings her wicked form, squealing down the corridor.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles plops his backside down again, scoots up to the desk.

Something's wrong. Something's missing. He taps all his pockets, lifts papers, folds his laptop. Nothing.

He goes to open the desk drawer. Locked. He tries the key.

Won't budge.

Charles yanks, shakes the drawer, rattles the whole desk. He's bent double, like trying to get out of somewhere small.

His wine goes over, splashes crimson on white papers.

Grimacing, he stops. It's locked. He leans back, looks at the ceiling, sighs into a series of small sobs.

INT: CHARLES' OFFICE - LATER

Charles, same position, sun already set. His rheumy, bloodshot eyes stare into space. He takes his wine bottle, glugs from the neck. It's good.

His fingers go to the desk drawer. It clicks open.

Charles stares dead ahead, not looking at what's inside.

Charles takes his keys, unlocks a slim cabinet.

He takes shotgun cartridges from the desk. Slides them decisively into the open barrels of his Beretta 12 gauge.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jeannie, full flow, leans back, lecturing --

-- Chef, brow knitted, eyes shut, massaging his temples.

JEANNIE

... keeps happening. Yeah, Pranic healing, I tell you. All to do with the effect of your Chakra.

She pushes her palms smoothly out from her navel.

A shower of tiny, multi coloured cherry blossoms streams forth with her hands.

It curves up slowly, heads right across the kitchen. She stares at what she's done, a terrified amateur.

Jeannie's flower wave thickens, crests and tumbles over --

-- Chef. Flowers pop, petals gently smother his face and shoulders.

Chef, eyes still closed, can't see.

Jeannie, awestruck, watches her miracle. Her face shines.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - NIGHT

Charles, drunkenly stoic, marches to the far end. The shotgun is cradled, broken across his forearm.

He selects a peaceful spot by the marigolds. Clicking the barrels shut as he kneels down, he loses his balance.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

All the flowers are gone. Chef, relaxed, shoulders dropped.

BANG!

The World Stops.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darren, glumly watching TV, notices the noise.

EXT: HOTEL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Sandra, chatting to guests, aghast at how close the shot is.

INT: HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jeannie and Chef stare at each other, horrified realisation. They bolt from the kitchen.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - NIGHT

They fade into the garden.

JEANNIE (O.S.)
Oh, my Lord.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Sandra, a mix of anguish and relief, whispers into her phone.

EXT: COUNTRYSIDE CHAPEL - DAY

Mourners file out in their sombre fashion.

INT: COUNTRYSIDE CHAPEL - DAY

The whole place emptied, except for --

-- Sandra, one cold, distant pace from --

-- the coffin. She approaches, leans in. She lays her hands, head and chest on the lid.

Embracing it, she closes her eyes, trying to hold the person inside one more time. Silent tears gather on the brass plate.

An unseen man clears his throat.

SANDRA
(softly, to the coffin)
Life is too short, Mum.

She touches her lips to the wood, drags herself away, to --

-- Charles, far off by the door leading to sunlight. A deep, freshly stitched split runs from his chin to his eye.

He remains still, one hand outstretched to Sandra.

She submits, crosses the bare chapel floor to her husband.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Sandra and Charles, deposited alone by a black limousine. Up the drive, arm in arm, Sandra's heels slow them down.

SANDRA

I don't mind not getting the exact bottle.

CHARLES

It's what she told me last month.

SANDRA

Last month?

EXT: HOTEL - DAY

Cars arrive. Other mourners make the gloomy journey on foot.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Darren and Jeannie work, pour free drinks at the Welcome Bar.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

The dining furniture has been moved to one side. Mourners mingle, occupy. They help themselves to an exquisite buffet.

EXT: HOTEL GARDEN - DAY

Smokers assemble, varying ages, light each other up. Drinks, fags and cigars on the go.

SMOKER #1

All I'm saying is, who the effing hell cleans a loaded shotgun, in the garden, in public, in the bloody dark?

Agreeing nods from the gaggle of smokers.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - DAY

Charles inspects a text message. Drops his mobile into his briefcase. Two wine glasses on the table. Charles pours himself a large glass of vino rosso. For Sandra, a dribble.

Her face shows insulted hesitation.

CHARLES
That's that over with.

SANDRA
(creeping fear)
Not quite. We should be getting -

CHARLES
I have waited quite long enough,
and now your mother's freeloaders
can wait a while, too. Catch up on
all the fucking gossip.

He gingerly touches the ugly scar running up his face.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Can't they? Darling?

Sandra, feverish, panicky eyes, landing anywhere but Charles.

SANDRA
I'll get the bottle.

CHARLES
Drink first.

He slides her glass an inch over. Takes a seat.

Sandra, uncomfortable, pinned to the spot.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
That's the last drink you'll get
out of me. You're certainly not
getting half my fucking business,
for you and your underage lover to
carve up. To fuck it all up. That
your plan, eh? Shackled up, with
some fanny blind, useless teenager?

She pulls a chair, trembles into it. The glass and tasting sample sits in front of her: dark, deliciously lit.

She rallies, defends.

SANDRA
I'm entitled to -

CHARLES
Good luck with that. Good luck.

SANDRA
 - half, Charles. I'm entitled to
 half.

He chuckles, mocking.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Knock it off, Charles. You just
 love to control everything. Sitting
 in that stupid office all day.
 Every bloody day.

Charles slaps his briefcase onto the table, flips it open. He
 withdraws a sheaf of documents, casts them across the table.
 They spill toward her.

Scatter onto the floor.

CHARLES
 Look familiar?

SANDRA
 (lying)
 No.

CHARLES
 Water. Tight.

She closes her eyes.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 So. She does remember. Ah, your
 mother's face when you signed it.

Sandra's face sours to venom.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
 Less than half your age. Younger,
 in fact, than your own son.

SANDRA
 Step son. Marginally. And I'm
 entitled -

CHARLES
 Read it! You think I'm setting you
 up? To live with... with... a
 fucking child!

Sandra reaches to a loose sheet of paper. Her voice cracks.

SANDRA
 I still love you, Charles.

CHARLES
 Use those words again. Go on. What
 you said to him. Did you? That you
 love him? Do you? DO YOU?

SANDRA

Yes! Ah, fuck, Charles! It's not all of a sudden. I feel like I'm in a prison.

He scoffs at her bullshit.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

But that would be less difficult to deal with.

CHARLES

Prison? With five bedrooms and a fucking annexe? A Range Rover, and a Rolex? That kind of prison?

SANDRA

I didn't mean it like that.

CHARLES

Well! None of this seems to be what it is now, does it? Enlighten me, Sandra, big, bad, bastard prison guard that I am, in what way have I put you in a prison?

SANDRA

I don't feel like me anymore. I'm like one of those little action dolls, like Nicholas had when he was little. Snappy, linked limbs to stand or sit or pretend to fight. When I get out of bed in the morning, that's how I see myself. Plastic, with pins in my joints and a stuck on, rigid face. Pretend.

CHARLES

Do you think you'd like to see someone about this? Talk it through.

SANDRA

I'm talking to you. I'm telling how your wife feels.

His eyes widen as she says 'wife'.

The doorbell chimes. Neither of them moves.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I know I've hurt you, Charles. I'd like you not to tell anyone. Please.

CHARLES

I bet you would. We'll see.

SANDRA
And don't hurt him. He's too young.

CHARLES
We agree on something.

The doorbell chimes again, and again.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Shall I get that?

SANDRA
Who is it? What have you -
Charles bounces up to answer the door.

CHARLES
Why, it's Loverboy, darling. Who else?

She hurtles after him.

SANDRA
Wait!

He lunges back into her face.

CHARLES
You fucking answer it, then, treacherous bitch. Invite him in, get rid of him. Sack that little shit, now. Tonight. Send him on his way however someone like you sees fit, or so help me, I'll put the little bastard in the fucking ground.

She twitches with loathing, eyes glint with spite. She turns on her heel, marches bravely to the front door.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Charles slams the back door, storms down the drive, as --
-- Sandra hastily guides Darren in the front.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Sandra and Darren sit on chairs in the hall. It's impersonal.

SANDRA
We can't help who we fall in love with. I can't.

DARREN
I know that.

SANDRA
And think about this, how many
auditions have you been to, even
contacted, since we -

DARREN
Fell in love.

SANDRA
Still, how many.

He looks defeated.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Exactly.

EXT: HOTEL - DAY

The sound of the wake is now more celebratory. Charles stomps toward it from the countryside setting sun.

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Charles, jovial in familiar company, orders drinks.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Darren's little boy look, about to cry. He tries to touch Sandra's hand. Awkwardly, she removes it, then touches his.

INT: HOTEL - NIGHT

Charles, zombie gazing at the floor. A friend slaps a hand on his shoulder. He's back - in the uproar of Millie's wake.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra and Darren roll across the floor, across the Pre-nup. Sandra has tears in her eyes. Darren stops, out of his depth.

EXT: VILLAGE PATH - NIGHT

Charles' feet swing along the moonlit pavement. Chin out, arms swing purposefully.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Sandra sobs, scribbles in a cheque book. She rips the cheque out, pushes it to Darren's hands. Bewildered, he accepts it.

Crying her eyes out, she guides him to the kitchen door.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The sound of Sandra crying from inside.

Charles, sad, leans in the shadows by the kitchen door.

In a moment, the door opens. Darren shuffles out. Sandra, sniffing, smacks the door shut.

Darren and Charles. Alone.

Darren, hope gone, faces the door. The kitchen lights go out.

CHARLES (O.S.)
Hello, boy.

Darren jolts to one side. Charles steps from his darkness.

DARREN
Frigging shit! Charles.

Charles' solemnity doesn't alter.

CHARLES
Got something for you, son.

Darren's guard goes up. Charles advances, stuffs a bundle of cash in Darren's breast pocket.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
There you go. That's for you... to fuck off.

He taps Darren on the cheek. Darren swipes Charles' hand away, just a touch too hard for Charles' liking.

Charles' forehead crunches into Darren's face. Darren's nose breaks, blood wells up across the bridge.

Darren crumples to the ground. Charles stoops, grabs Darren by the back of the head.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Ssh... okay. Okay, now.

Charles gives a nod for Darren to comply. He nods back.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Excellent. Now, fuck off.

He shoves Darren to his feet. Darren, nursing his smashed nose and blackening eyes, stumbles away.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Jeannie, propped up in bed, reads a copy of 'Veneficium'. She hears a door slam. She gets up, slips her robe on.

INT: DARREN'S STAFF BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darren, furiously packing to leave. He hears Jeannie's knock.

He flings the door wide, glares at her. She's seen fist fights before.

JEANNIE

Wow. He got you, then.

She breezes in. His attitude changes to a different kind of heat. He takes hold of Jeannie, tries to drag her robe open.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Whoa! Easy, boy.

She repels his hands. He's easily defeated.

DARREN

I can't stay. Can't stay here.

She gestures for him to follow her, out of this room.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - LATER NIGHT

Jeannie presents Darren with a roll up. Makes herself one. She hops onto the bed, lighting up, chucks him the lighter.

He sits at the foot of the bed.

DARREN

Thanks. Aren't you sick of being here? It's mental.

JEANNIE

Ah, but easy. Piss it, don't I?

DARREN

Come on. There's tons of places you could go. Centres, retreats, all that shit.

JEANNIE

So, if you're leaving, which I'd say you'd definitely better be, everyone has to leave.

Darren stares, smokes. She prods his leg with her toe. And again. He looks up at her.

DARREN

What?

JEANNIE

Don't go just yet.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Another bright, fresh day fills the short street.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Dust motes hover in the quiet spaces.

From upstairs, the sound of someone getting ready.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM/VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

Sandra's funeral dress hangs on the back of the door. She takes it down, thoughtfully strokes the nap of the cloth.

She hangs it in her wardrobe.

Fastening her gown, she glides --

-- downstairs, strides through --

-- the Drawing Room, and freezes.

Charles, still in his suit, asleep on a couch.

She retreats to the kitchen, tidies up as noisily as possible.

Charles opens his eyes. Sandra smashes about.

Charles feet pound each stair up to their bedroom.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - DAY

Jeannie quietly scrabbles about, checks drawers. Carefully empties them on the floor.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra's hand reaches for the taster glass, untouched.

She stops. Looks at it, as if it might bite.

She draws her hand back.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM - DAY

Charles, clothes hung on the floor, snores in bed.

Sandra wafts in, checks he's sleeping. She gets her usual work suit out, pauses. Drops it --

-- on top of Charles' suit at her feet.

EXT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Sandra, T-shirt, jeans, trainers, sunglasses and her hair up.
She sneaks out like a morning sprite, to find --

-- her Range Rover blocked in by Charles' Jaguar.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

She sprints back upstairs.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM - DAY

Kneeling, she goes through Charles' pockets.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - DAY

Jeannie tiptoes to her door. She hears a familiar engine
approaching along the drive.

She puts her face by the window, to see --

-- Charles' Jaguar.

Alarmed, she darts from view.

EXT: HOTEL - DAY

Sandra leaps up the Reception steps, ignores vacantly hopeful
Guests. Her disguise doesn't work.

CHORUS OF GUESTS

Sandra. Sandra. Excuse me, Sandra.

She runs from them. Some pipe down. Grumpy Guy follows her.

Jeannie, satchel, case and coat, stalks smartly toward
Reception. Toward Sandra.

Grumpy Guy hurries along behind Sandra.

SANDRA

Jeannie!

Jeannie hides, holds her breath, being thin again.

GRUMPY GUY

Excuse me. I've been sitting there -

Sandra spins on him.

SANDRA

Shush.

He's shushed. Sandra skips away again.

Jeannie sneaks by, holding 'Veneficium' to hide her face.

INT: STAFF QUARTERS CORRIDOR - DAY

Sandra motors along.

SANDRA
Jeannie. Jeannie!

She knocks on Jeannie's door.

INT: JEANNIE'S STAFF ROOM - DAY

Sandra is heard, knocking, calling.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Jeannie, come on.

INT: STAFF QUARTERS CORRIDOR - DAY

Darren, bleary eyed and beat up, answers Jeannie's door.

Sandra, taken aback. His battered face toughens her up again.

SANDRA
There you are. Chop, chop.

DARREN
I was fast asleep.

SANDRA
Well, I am wide awake. I need you
dressed. Out front. Now.

INT: LOBBY - DAY

Jeannie places a small envelope onto the Reception desk.

It's addressed simply:- 'Charles'.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' BEDROOM/VARIOUS - DAY

Charles wakes.

He toddles downstairs in his boxers, slumps into a chair. His laptop pings.

EXT: HOTEL - DAY

Jeannie, a different young lady, struts down the drive.
Charles' Jaguar races past her.

INT: SANDRA AND CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Charles' finger hovers over his mouse. On the screen is the
Rolls Royce website. The icon rests at:- 'BOOK A TEST DRIVE'.

Charles' finger clicks.

FADE TO:

EXT: SKYSCAPE

Constable clouds hang peacefully.

SUPER 'One week later...'

SUPER FADES

SUPER '... under a Distant Sky.'

SUPER FADES

EXT: SUBURBAN STREET, LONDON - DAY

A regular terraced row. The Gherkin et al, grey and distant.

At the far junction, a black Range Rover negotiates kids with
pushchairs, kids on bikes.

It rolls, eases away into traffic.

Back along the street, a tatty front door shuts.

INT: LONDON FLAT - DAY

Darren at the front door, inspects peeling wallpaper.

In the sparse kitchen, he rummages in drawers. One of the
fronts comes away in his hand. He presses it back on, hard.

Leaves it.

It clatters to the floor. His phone chirps.

He checks the message.

DARREN

Yes!

He grabs a motorcycle helmet, dashes to the front door.

EXT: LONDON FLAT, FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Darren twirls a 'bunch' of 2 keys in the air.

INT: DARREN'S LONDON FLAT - DAY

Another 'bike helmet lifted. Outside, a small engine starts.

EXT: LONDON FLAT, FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Darren twists the throttle into a staccato wheeze. He paddles his crappy old scooter to the road. Clicks it into gear.

Someone else, in the other helmet, hoists a leg over the seat behind Darren. They wrap their gloved hands firmly around Darren's waist. He waits, revs.

DARREN

Sandy.

SANDRA

Shush. Daz.

They zip off down the street.

A couple of streets later, it's a London snarl up. Darren weaves the scooter in and out of cars, buses, vans, lorries.

Up front: Sandra's old Range Rover.

They fly past it. Sandra leans round, eyes sparkling. She throws her old car the V sign, as --

-- Darren and Sandra head off together.

FADE TO BLACK.